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THE CREATION STORY AND OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

By Theophil L. Haas

II.

The Bible gives us no clue as to the manner in which the inspired writer of Genesis 1 received the knowledge which his magnificent picture of creation reflects. But this picture evidently reveals the human element of tradition, reflection and speculation on the origin of the world and on the process of its coming into existence. The story is neither in itself, nor much less as interpreted by some forms of older or newer fundamentalism, an essential part of our Christian faith. But its author seems to chrystallize and sublimate certain time-honored conceptions and constructions of Semitic, and more specifically of Babylonian tradition, into thoughts and truths of perennial beauty, power and value. It is plainly *the work of some God-directed religious genius,* to whom that "Funke goettlicher Schoepferkraft, welcher ueber die Grenzen unsers verstaendig und selbstbewusst rechnenden Denkens hinausgeht" (H. von Helmholtz) came to bring light and warmth. This spark of creative power, coming to illumine what was dark and to raise and support what was low and weak, enabled the writer to climb higher and to see farther than any antecedents; to purify and elevate the cruder, baser elements of Semitic lore and to open our eyes to such irrefutable and imperishable truths as the sovereignty of God and the excellence of man.

The picture of the creation may bear the colors and contours of a panoramic vision; it may have come to the author somewhat like the visions that were presented to Daniel and Ezechiel. (Thus

Godet and others). But the panorama, if we choose, is clearly fitted into the frame-work of the holy week, with *the Sabbath as its climax.* Its inspiration is the thought of the completion and perfection of God's work and of man's obligation to realize his life-purpose in working and resting in his Maker. It does not transcend the general scientific limitations of its time, nor was it ever intended to furnish anything like scientific accuracy. We should not do justice to the true nature of faith in maintaining as with Bryan vs. Darrow—or inspiration vs. evolution—God's clear and explicit intention, in giving us His Word, to supply mankind with something like an infallible guide for the discussion or solution of geological, biological, or astronomical questions. God's Word is not concerned with scientific problems, for such problems are not relevant to our spiritual development. God's purpose in giving us a history, in which He revealed Himself in words and deeds, as these are interpreted by the chosen vessels of His inspiration, is the truth unto salvation. But on the other hand, we may rest assured: no unbiased scientific investigation will ever be able to marshall any valid, destructive arguments and objections against the eternal religious truths conveyed in this Word.

The *essential religious truths* to be gathered from the creation story would briefly be as follows:

1. At some time heaven and earth, or all that exists, were made by God, the eternal spirit of power, wisdom and love, and all these qualities are shown and declared by His handiwork.

2. The creation was due to God's word; it is thus an expression of His will.

3. The world is made in conformity to some definite plan, embracing a development from the lower to the higher; or, as even Haeckel says: the thought of separation and differentiation or of progressive development and perfection is everywhere discernible. This thought did not escape the powerful theological and philosophical genius of Augustine, when he taught a creatio indirecta, or the intuitive keenness of Luther when he uses the well-known words: "Der allmaechtige Gott hat die Welt nicht auf einen Hui geschaffen."

4. The creation of man, an incorporated spirit, is God's own interest, the terminus of His ways and works. Man therefore, though earthy and earthly according to his body, is yet God's child, having God's nature and spirit and meant for His love and work.

Hence there are *three great central ideas* embodied in the documents: *The cause* of the world— *God; the way* toward its coming to be what it is—*gradual progress;* and *the aim* for which all is made—*man through, in, and for God.*

Let us briefly summarize the main statements of the creation story.

In the use of the word "bara" the thought is to be conveyed and impressed, that what was first present in God's mind was subsequently brought into material existence, a thought so profoundly expressed in Jacob Boehme's idea of God's involving and evolving the world, when he speaks of "Einhuellen und Enthuellen", or of all things being in God "essentialisch" but not yet "corporalisch," or before they are shown in their "Schiedlichkeit". Thus the heathen and dualistic conception of the eternal coexistence of matter and spirit is entirely foreign to the report.

In the second and the following verses the author passes from the universe or the whole of created things to our own home, the terrestrial globe, which at first is pictured as waste and void, or with its elements and forces still in an unseparated condition. The earth in particular now becomes the field in which God's spirit of life and order is to operate. Chaos is changed into kosmos, and under the picture of days, or the frame-work of the Sabbatical week, or, as science would have it, during periods of unknown duration, the main phases of this evolving, changing process are shown to emerge, as the outstanding peaks of a distant mountain range might be seen to rise and grow and to stretch themselves into the azure skies above. Matter then is being organized for the appearance of vegetable and of animal life, and under the necessary conditions of light, air and soil the earth is made to grow and bloom in verdant and florid beauty to the honor and glory of its Maker.

With verse 14 the report begins to center about the development of organic life. The home with proper living conditions had been provided; it now remains for the occupant to step on the scene. The heavenly luminaries are brought into vital relation to the earth; they must shed their light upon its work and thus become connected with the great coming forth of animal, and later of intelligent life. Everything, as shown, is directed with the divine objective of the making of a habitable home with man as its tenant, its master and its king.

Two things are emphasized with respect to the creation of man. The human body is earthy, taken like that of the animals from the ground; but it is fashioned into an instrument for a heavenly spirit. *Man, therefore, as we would say, is a part of God's intent and content and is made by a special act of creation.* Thus matter has been elaborated in the course of a progressive development, or let us say, in a vast and wonderful evolutionary design, until it is able to become the organ and servant of mind or spirit, the home and tool in man for a living soul in the likeness and image of God.

Thus we have, on the one hand, a certain period covering the first three days in the Biblical report and leading up to the first appearance of life in the form of plant life; and on the other, a second age comprising the fourth, fifth and sixth days, and preparing for the highest form of life, for that of the living soul.

It is impossible to deny many truly striking traits of resemblance between our scriptural picture of the creation and many more or less firmly established data of scientific research. The story, therefore, does not, as the naturalist of monistic convictions would have us believe, reflect nothing but the crude and primitive speculations and superstitions of a distant past; but its extreme defendant ad dextram is likewise wrong in asseverating a flawless and gapless cosmogony for the ipsissima verba of a divine revelation to the author or authors of the document, as we have it before us.

The Christian who has a true valuation of the nature and purpose of divine revelation as a means and a ministry unto faith, and who knows that the one aim of the record of God's revelation or of His Word is ever to be man's spiritual regeneration, or a new creation for the higher and highest kingdom, a kingdom of peace and joy and righteousness in the Holy Spirit, will have no difficulty in finding some very salient similarities between the creation story and the findings of sane and solid scientific investigation. Questions, therefore, as to the length of the days of the story, or as to the priority of certain primitive forms of animal life to some forms of plant life, or as to the creation of some kind of primeval light independent of sun, moon and stars, cause him very little anxiety and perturbation. *The essential and fundamental for him will ever remain untouched.* He knows no reason why he should fear the magic name of science; no, he will rather welcome and further every honest effort of the student of nature to disclose and understand the laws and forces at work in God's wonderful and beautiful workshop. Yes, he will be thankful for any thorough, careful, humble explanation of the world as it is, and adding link to link to the great chain of causal connections at which man in his burning pursuit of comprehensive knowledge has been working for thousands and thousands of years.

True Christian faith is never contra-scientific; it is supra-scientific. It is ready to acknowledge a real indebtedness to the work of science, which has made God's writing in nature so wonderfully and beautifully legible. It considers both science and religion, after all, as two daughters of God; there it may be a Martha, here a Mary, but both serving their Lord, from whom all good, all truth, and all its seeking and finding cometh. (Jam. 1, 17).

The Christian's impregnable conviction in face of so much,

which he is asked to accept and endorse in the name of science, is that of *a theocentric orientation of all things.* (Rom. 11, 36). His faith in a personal God enables him to see in Genesis 1 a view of the world in consonance with the nature and purpose of God's revelation. Matter with all its implanted and embedded potentialities, motion and energy with all its infallible modes of operation, life in all its multitudinous and multifarious forms, and life, finally, as working in an embodied spirit, in the living soul meant for a kingdom of love in God: all these, it holds, are but traceable to his Father's power, wisdom and love. And it is furthermore convinced that the things that are made by mind can also be read by mind, and that *nature itself is but God's great book,* given in a wonderful, visual language and opened before the eyes of those who have been made able to read and to know: (Psalm 19). Thus again, questions of detail, as to the whence and when and how of things, to the bodily descent of man, to the origin of species etc. concern the Christian very little. But he is glad to know that such a prince of science as Du Bois Reymond was forced to proclaim his famous ignoramus and ignorabimus, or the two insurmountable barriers before all our knowledge of nature: we shall never comprehend matter and energy, nor the true relation between matter and mind. And he is furthermore glad to have Tyndall and Wallace at times on his side, thus when the former says that a man is as little able to prove a causal connection between organization and consciousness, as he can lift himself by his own waistband; or, when the latter asserts that biological evolution fails to account for man's uniqueness, and that an act, which we might popularly term special creation, would have to be postulated to explain the great chasm between the highest order of animals and man.

Nothing, it has been said, has been evolved except what had in some way been involved. God is both immanent and transcendent with respect to His creation, within and above His work. He has created and will continue to create. (Acts 17, 28; John 5, 17). The modern science of astrophysics has found new worlds and universes in the making, and Henri Bergson's epochal work "Creative Evolution" shows life as possessed of a tremendous élan vital, or of a push toward constantly higher forms and values of life. For this modern philosopher evolution is a creation increasingly renewed, creating, as it goes on, not only the forms of life but also the ideas that enable the intellect to understand them; or, as the Christian would say, God's thoughts and plans have been and will be carried out. God's future overflows His present.

The true Christian will never idolize nature and its forces polytheistically nor identify it with God pantheistically. He will

furthermore necessarily consider himself as a mere part of nature; but he will also glory in being an offspring of nature's Maker. He alone can grasp the full meaning of Pascal's powerful antithesis as to the most abject and the most noble of creatures—there in face of our sin, here of God's grace. Science, indeed, may make him very small; it may tend to minimize man and his world in dethroning geocentricism and heliocentricism; but his faith will magnify him as *his Father's child, to whom in Christ all things belong.* Others in our days may magnify their science and minimize their religion, but he will continue to feel himself a child and an heir of his God, whose image and reflex by grace he is privileged to bear. His doubt, of course, will often feel inclined to ask, when he is told to exult in his excellent position: What after all is the meaning of the vast volumes of matter surrounding us in their incomprehensible accumulation,—what the relation of life and mind to the vast universe of which we are but an infinitesimal part? Yes, it may ask in the words of Sir James Jeans: "Are we merely part of the same picture as they—the masses of nebulae—or is it possible that we are part of the artist?" But his faith will be bold to answer with Pascal once more: "Man may be but a reed, the most feeble reed of nature; but yet he is a thinking reed; and though the universe may crush him, yet is he more noble than his slayer, because he knows that he is dying." Toute notre dignité consiste donc en la pensée," and to true Christian faith, this dignity is destiny and the Christian's destiny is his dignity.

But, of course, it is only through faith (Hebr. 11, 3), that the eternal truths of Rom. 11, 36 can be grasped. Natural man receiveth the things of the senses; he may and should keenly weigh, grade and measure their modi existendi and operandi. But spiritual man judges things spiritually and finds even in the paradoxes and the seemingly foolish things of life the loving and guiding will of a Father, whose deep thoughts and ways he is everywhere seeking to detect and to affirm. The future is to him the father of the past and of the present, and as natural man finally comes forth in the creative work of God as the purpose and measure of created things, so *a new man is seen in the making,* drawn by the new creation of God, the Kingdom of peace and love and joy in Him in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This Kingdom is both driving and drawing for a new order of things, with a new set of laws and a higher level of individual and social implications and applications.

Modern theories of creative and emergent evolution, or of creative synthesis, sometimes speak of something like those higher levels which the spiritual man will find envisaged in such chapters

as Genesis 1; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 2 and 15. In the making and raising of these higher levels or of an ascending scale of creation (universe—earth—mineral—vegetable—animal kingdoms and the kingdoms of mind and of love) a great deal of raw-material may have been cast aside or wasted, as it were; but in all this making and raising, the Christian believer is convinced, God's ideas and ideals, the true meters and motors of all things, have ever increasingly emerged and prevailed. And then, the best is yet to come. It is true, of course, that at times the thinking Christian observer, in pondering over so much that has been, is and will be in this imperfect world of the "not yet" will be tempted to grasp at something like a Schopenhauerian pessimism, or at such a view of the world and of life, as though some blind will had now been working and trying, then effacing and erasing for countless ages, until such "dabbling," at last, resulted in a sort of freak in man and a kind of farce in his work. (The mystery of sin.) Yes, at times, such serious works as K. Steffensen's "Philosophy of History" and O. Spengler's "Decline of the West" may cast a sombre gloom over his mind; but then again, *he will never relinquish his grasp of the Infinite and the Absolute,* and he will cling to Him, whose infinite absolute love and grace was manifested in a full life of service, suffering and sacrifice, that he might have life more abundantly. Yes, though dark his way and dark God's way in so much he cannot understand, yet he may and will still sing and praise, for to his faith even the darkness of night must become the light of a joyous and glorious vision. The exploding—if it may so be termed—of timehonored and perhaps threadbare arguments of teleology (Paley's Watch argument etc.) does not discomfit him. No, even the seemingly purposeless and the cruel in life may for him become means of the power and wisdom and benevolence of his heavenly Father. Cycles and spirals of culture and civilizations may come and go; they may rise and fall, and flow and ebb according to some mysterious cosmic rythm. But to theocentric and christocentric faith, hope, and love they are mere sectors of the great circle of history whose center, God in Christ, in faith in us, and with us abideth forever. (Lasst die Welt zu Truemmern gehn, Gottes Gnade wird bestehn). Faith, indeed, looks at things both micro- and macroscopically; it finds God's mind and love working in the smallest and greatest, mere relativities and inferences before the species eternitatis; it aims at understanding things, as Goethe advises, im Zusammenhang, and it feels that the many vagaries and mysteries of science, man's own work, only vindicate the truth and wisdom of the famous dictum: "das ist das Ende der Philosophie, zu wissen, dass wir glauben muessen."

The work of science lies within the field and reach of natural man, or of mind. Spiritual man is supra-scientific; his sphere is the sphere of love, and he feels and finds the underlying, ultimate power and purpose of all things in God, in His coming to us in love, and in His revelation to us in nature, in history and in His Kingdom of grace. *And the final meaning of all*—the telos teleion —according to the words of Steffensen: "Nicht das Wissen, sondern ein neues Herz, uebernatuerliche Geburt ist der Sinn der Geschichte."

Godly wisdom, therefore, in this conviction is not restlessly agitate over every new theory and hypothesis as to the process of creation; it holds an invincible position in its belief, that all mysteries are but awaiting their unveiling in Him, whose will has ever worked and is ever working in orderly progress, be it in nature, in history, or in the Church, toward that final consummation of all things in the new heaven and the new earth of His promise. The achievements of science are wonderful, but to many they may be dangerous. A certain science has not only raised homes of work, help, rest, of rescue and welfare but sometimes also temples and altars to homo sibi deus, thus only too often meriting the name "Science, the False Messiah," just as a certain religion, alas, too often has deserved the name "The Great Fanatic." Godly wisdom is always humble and thus it does not dare affirm a clearly visible and traceable teleology in all things; it rather feels that such a teleology would not even be conducive to a healthy Christian view of the world and of life in the economy of faith. But it rejoices in finding the *true élan vital of God's love everywhere,* creating not only the beauties of the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal worlds, or the higher values of mental life in art, science and the state, in social order and service; but moreover, creating in a general raising over all preparatory and subsidiary levels, in worship and love, that beautiful and powerful, death-defying synthesis with our Maker and our Saviour (Rom. 8. 35-39) in which it is possible to feel the beauty and power of the mystic affluence and effluence of the "Laudes Creaturarum" of the Saint of Assisi, to whom brother sun and sister moon and the whole of created things were eloquently vocal in praising their master; or to share in the rapturous reverence of the unknown author of the wonderful "Soliloquies of Saint Augustine," when he sings and exults:

> "Tu es lux, tu es vita, tu es veritas. Laudet te sapientia tua, potentia tua, clementia tua.
> *Laudet te quoque benignitas tua et caritas tua, per quam creasti nos, Domine Deus, vita animae meae.*"

In How Far Must Christian Thought Adjust Itself to the Modern, Scientific Interpretation of Life and the Universe

By H. Vieth

There can be no doubt that this question is one of the many which today are affecting profoundly and seriously the inner life of thinking men and women. The question is old and the answer has always been difficult, because religion and science form wholly separate and different categories of life. In our day the answer is especially difficult because life is at the same time more complex and more mechanical than it has ever been before. It is more complex because the activities of human life have been divided into many highly specialized branches, each demanding a great amount of technical knowledge, and a comprehension of the whole of life by the individual becomes increasingly impossible. It is more mechanical because the increasing dependence on machinery has brought with it a corresponding loss in the dignity and value of the human personality. Both of these developments have had their reactions on the religious life and on scientific endeavor and accomplishment and in addition have profoundly affected the psychological attitudes of the individual. But as long as we desire to preserve both our cultural and our richly spiritual religious heritage, we dare not give up the attempt to find a solution to this problem, no matter how difficult it may seem. The very complexity of modern life seems to indicate that only the cooperation and collaboration of many different types of mind can bring us nearer a real solution which would satisfy every real human need. On this basis I justify the following analysis, which, while not offering a final solution, tries to make the premises for such a solution a little clearer by an unbiased approach to the two sides of the question.

We define the term religion as referring to man's personal relation to the invisible and intangible world of spirit which lies beyond the world of material and demonstrable fact in which we live. In stating this definition we do not lose sight of the fact that there are many, both with and without scientific training, who deny that there are any realities except those which admit of concrete demonstration and ultimate establishment as facts. We readily admit that there is no scientific proof of such spiritual realities and that, in the very nature of things, there can be no such proof, not, at least, on the basis of our present conception. But we are just as fully aware of the fact that a purely mechanistic and material philosophy does not and can not explain the origin and nature of

the universe. The greatest thinkers and philosophers have always been aware of this and the testimony of such men, from Socrates to Newton and Kepler, and countless others, is overwhelmingly in favor of establishing spiritual values as a real category; on the basis that the spiritual is defined by the characteristics of rationality, personality, cosmic universality and goodness. It is also clear that on any other basis religion would be purely an illusion and as such a hindrance rather than a help to true progress.

Mankind has not only always attested the reality of spiritual values, but has also laid claim to a spirituality within, something which forever sets man apart from the brute and by which he can have and does have contact with the intangible world of spirit, whether such contact be adjudged illusory or real, it is an undeniable fact that it has released tremendous spiritual powers in all who claimed such contact and, in a lesser degree, in all who came to share with them their religious experience in a communion of faith. By such contact man has risen to the greatest heights of accomplishment in the spiritual realm, and the farther he was removed from such contact or the dimmer his recollection and knowledge of it became, the more was he inclined to sink nearer the level of the brute. In support of this contention we cite the fact that the rise and fall of great cultures is inextricably interwoven with the rise and fall of a great religion. This cannot be classed as mere coincidence, for coincidences do not invariably repeat themselves. In addition, it should be noted that all great cultural accomplishments in the arts and sciences have their root in religion, give of their best to the glory of religion, and often exhaust themselves in its service. They only emancipate themselves from religion when, in the later years of a great culture, they fail to find in religion the inspiration for new creative ideas; because religion, becoming institutionalized, has lost its high spiritual purpose. But in turning elsewhere for this, to them, essential inspiration, they have never been successful. (Compare Spengler.) At least history has no record of a case where religion has been replaced as a source of inspiration for creative ideas.

In spite of his inherent relation to spiritual ideas, man had no terminology to express them, since the spiritual values are intangible. He had to adapt his terminology dealing with the tangible world surrounding him to these newer values, using terms that by analogy had a certain relation to the values to be expressed. Such analogous terms could never fully convey the thought content as originally conceived and intended and in this fact may be found one of the roots of religious controversies, whose function it is to definitely fix the thought content of the terms in their religious

adaptation. Since language is in a state of flux and undergoing constant changes, a word may so change in meaning that when used in a religious sense it no longer bears out the original analogy. especially after the controversies fixing its content have been forgotten. Religionists are apt to forget that religious terms express spiritual values by analogy, and to ascribe to such terms too great and absolute a value. By their unwillingness to change their terminology and replace terms whose analogy no longer applies, by newer terms that by analogy bear a definite relation to the spiritual values to be expressed, they have unnecessarily aggravated the problem of adjustment between science and faith.

It is of course impossible to discuss all religious terms, but we can say something about those terms in which man has conveyed his religious meaning most lastingly and most universally. We take the four terms, God, Immortality, Holiness, Eternity, by which man has tried to express the reality of the intangible, spiritual world which he has experienced.

By the term God it is intended to express the causality of that reality and its culmination in a personal being. By Immortality is designated its exemption from the power of death, by Holiness its exemption from sin and evil, and by Eternity its freedom from the limitations of time. While all these terms are at times used with interpretations, either stated or implied, which differ from the ones here given, yet among people of definite religious convictions these definitions are commonly accepted and are intended to convey the impression that to the religious conviction the spiritual realities appear as free from those limitations which give to the realities of our life here the aspect of incompleteness and imperfection, of finiteness. Because all other religious conceptions are grouped around these, they may be termed the fundamental ideas of religion.

But the very fact that man expressed his experience of an intangible reality in tangible speech, made his religious experience in its expressed form a part of the mental equipment of his race and age. What man experiences is his own, what he professes belongs to mankind. Through the expression in tangible speech, the experience of the spiritual reality may thus be shared in a vicarious manner with a great many people, though it seems only natural that such a vicarious experience would lack the freshness and vividness of an immediate one, and would not carry with it the same releasing of spiritual forces. On the other hand, the expression of the religious experience may act merely as a stimulus which leads others to the same immediate and personal experience or a very similar one, as took place in the one who first

expressed it. Where the religious experience is purely a vicarious one and represents merely the acquistion by a sort of mental process of the tangibly expressed religious experience of others, there we have religion by belief. Where, however, the religious experience is real, immediate, and personal, whether it be original or caused by the stimulus of the experience of others, there we have religion by faith.

Unfortunately these two terms are often used interchangeably. In its deepest meaning, faith is the response to the excitation of revelation or that activity of the divinity by which it establishes contact with man. In revelation and faith the divinity and man are mutually polarized to establish a relationship in the only field which is to them common ground. To express it in a different manner: God is found by faith, but statements regarding God are believed.

The more the experience which gave rise to a religious expression or statement recedes into the past, the greater becomes the probability that such expression or statement will be accepted not only by those to whom religion is still experience and have no desire for one; whose acceptance is based on their sincere admiration for religious truths because of the ethical reactions. Under those circumstances it is only natural that religious terms should gradually acquire a content in which elements of common morality, of standards of decency, of philosophic thought, and of scientific knowledge, are absorbed with the original religious elements. One needs only to study the changing content of such expressions as "justification by faith" from Luther's day to this, or of "conversion" from Wesley's day to this, to discover that such a process is inevitable.

As far as religion by belief is concerned, it is evident from this that the terms accepted in that type of religion have already passed through a certain adjustment, in which they have acquired a new content by absorption from the other elements of the mental life of their day, of which they are inevitably a part. Whatever of struggle was involved in such adjustment belongs to the past. These adjustments are not made consciously by the individual, hence the individual may not be aware of them. They are not even always made by the religious communions, of whose spiritual heritage the particular expressions form a part, and hence these communions may not be aware of them. They are the result, rather, of slow processes which take place in the general religious thought of any age. But when by such process religious terms have adjusted themselves to the scientifically recorded facts of their day, the new content is accepted, with the term, by all who base their

religion on belief. Take for example the term "creation." Though one need not accept all the extreme theories of evolution promulgated since Darwin's day, the fact remains that during the last fifty years our knowledge regarding the process by which our world came into being has undergone very profound changes. For many there is no longer any contradiction between the fact of creation and the facts of evolution and they use the term "creation" in a manner which is inclusive of the facts of evolution. These subconscious adjustments must not be confused with conscious adjustment, growing out of a real struggle, of which we will speak later.

If this were all that could be said on the subject there would be no real problem but only an imaginary one, based on the fear of the new and unknown from which man has not yet fully emancipated himself. The problem is complicated by the relativities and uncertainties of science which are as little understood by the average man as are the analogies which underlie our religious terms. Science deals with the realities of the material world, with facts and their implications and the deductions based on them, with concepts. But science is not absolute. In the first place it is not now and never has been in possession of all the facts regarding life and the world in which it is lived. Newly discovered facts are constantly changing our knowledge of life and it is not possible to state the relative number of known and unknown facts. Hence it follows that the deductions and concepts of science are not absolutely but relatively true, even provided that the process of deduction is free from error: and new facts may at any time either modify or nullify them. The system of Copernicus replaced the system of Ptolemaeus, because new facts had made the older system obsolete. The newest deductions in speculative mathematics as propounded by Einstein and others may yet make the system of Copernicus seem obsolete, should their apparent logic and fact-basis reach a greater degree of probability than they now have. And even Einstein may be superseded.

In the second place, the evidence on which many of the so-called facts of science rest, admit of a variety of interpretations, any of which may be affected by preconceived ideas and by an subconscious a-priori thought-process. New and sounder interpretations may and do change the aspect of certain facts. We cite Virchow's decision that the skull plate of the Pithecanthropus erectus belonged to a true monkey.

Nor is this all. The sum total of human knowledge has grown to such an amazing extent that no single mind can grasp or master all the details. Even the scientist, outside of his own particular branch, is dependent on the judgment of others. And the great

mass of people share in the scientific knowledge of our day not by a conscious process of scientific reasoning but by belief in the authority of certain scientists. The process is very similar to the one observed for the religious life.

In addition it must be observed that science is ultimately speculative. The dividing line between fact and speculation is not always clearly drawn and is often completely lost sight of by those who necessarily absorb their knowledge of scientific fact by belief, and for the average man it is utterly impossible to check in the deductions of science the possibility of error or the probability of insufficient facts in the premises. Out of the total mass of facts and deductions the popular mind has formed a conglomerate picture of the world, which can be compared only to the imaginary worlds of gods and fairies as conceived by more primitive peoples. In this popular conception lies the real danger and the real difficulty; for we are dealing here with beliefs which are deeply rooted in the fear of failing to measure up to the spirit of the modern world. There is no greater fear than the fear of seeming to be behind the times.

We are now ready to approach the problem of conscious and purposeful adjustment between science and religion. Two questions here present themselves. 1. What is to be adjusted? 2. To what must adjustments be made?

What must be adjusted, what is there in our religion that is no longer in harmony with the fact-world as established by modern science? If we make a test of fundamental factors and underlying principles in religion, we will find that these are not out of harmony with the world as the modern, scientifically trained mind sees it. The causality of God,—the fact of creation, the personality of God,—the conception of the creative force in terms of personality, the fact that sin is a degrading, debasing force, a destroyer of life, the need of a saviour and the conception of saviourship as a spiritual force, the fact that time is limited and that the end of time does not mean an absolute end, that, hence, beyond time there is the possibility of life,—the fact of eternity,—all these facts are readily accepted by scientists the world over. Personal convictions regarding God, sin, the Saviour, immortality, need no adjustment, or none of which we are conscious, when such convictions have been acquired in the modern world.

There are, however, certain interpretations attached to all terms, in which bygone ages have expressed their conviction regarding these matters. These terms were formulated in ages which saw the world differently than we see it today. They saw a world which, whether conceived as a macrocosm or as a microcosm, was

vastly smaller and simpler than ours. Against this background religious convictions were placed as conceived and were inevitably tinted by it. It follows that adjustments must come in those historical interpretations of religious truths which we have inherited from the past. They are revered, and rightly, because of their intimate connection with the great religious events and because of the part they have played in religious history. But they are after all only the garments of truths, not the truths themselves. If we should lose them all the great religious realities would again impress themselves upon the mind of man. As long as God and man are realities, the facts of the revelation of God to man are as inevitably retained as the acceptance of that revelation is expressed in religious convictions. So there need be no fear regarding these needed adjustments on the part of those who hold their religious convictions as their most priceless possession. On the other hand there must be no undue insistence that these adjustments be generalized immediately. The variableness of our scientific concepts is too great for them to be accepted as standards of our religious convictions. There is a danger that because we live in a scientific age, science will desire to shape the religious convictions of that age. That is not the business of science. Religious convictions grow out of religious experiences and can come in no other way. Perhaps the whole difficulty rests on the fact that science today is a vital force and of immediate concern to a great many people, while frequently our religious convictions are not our own but are accepted by us on trust. It seems to me that a real, immediate, personal, religious experience is today a comparatively rare thing. We study religion as we do science and hence their sometimes conflicting claims present to us a real problem, which would cease to exist if we had a vital experience in which we were overwhelmed by the realities of God, sin, and the Saviour. Our interpretations of that experience would then adjust themselves, not to the constantly changing concepts, but to that world picture which remains in our mind as a permanent result from our study of the changing deductions and concepts of science. The problem is always most insistent and difficult where man confronts the relativities of interpretations, and will cease to torment the mind of man when he learns to confront instead the realities of the material and spiritual world, for the Creator of the universe and the Father of spirits are one.

"EVANGELICAL ECONOMIC ETHICS"

A Book Chat with Reflections on the Recent Developments of Social Ethics in Germany

A. Ruecker

At this time when we in America are eagerly scanning the pages of Harry F. Ward's new book, OUR ECONOMIC MORALITY and the ETHICS OF JESUS, it might not be amiss to take a peep over our national fences in order to see what is being done along the same or similar lines in present German theological circles.

"They dive down deepests, stay down longest, and come up muddiest." Thus one of my esteemed teachers once characterized the scientific labors of German scholars. The interpretation of this dictum I must leave to the reader—and various interpretations fit the case. Striking, in general, about German scientific pursuit is the depth and zeal of research and the mass of patiently and meticulously worked out detail, but only too often also a certain lack of practical application. Yet we take off our hat to the savant who cheerfully gives the best of his life to explore the philosophic and scientific bedrock on which the rest of us so confidently build the issues of life. We take the "as if" for granted, but he questions and scrutinizes it, and either assures us of the correctness of our assumption, thus giving our practical pursuit a solid foundation, or he corrects our assumption and helps us rebuild on firmer ground.

That Christ's gospel of the Kingdom contains very vital and extremely valuable social and economic implications and that the churches should bring the spotlight of Christian truth to bear upon the social and economic conditions and problems of our times, has been for many years past a practical conviction of the Anglican and American churches. Anglo-American activism, true to the spiritual legacy of Calvinism, believed that the churches have not only the right, but were also in duty bound to make their voice heard in the market places of men, yes, to bring the full weight of their moral pressure to bear upon the social, political, and economic affairs of men. And yet with all sincerity of conviction and earnestness of purpose we fumbled and bungled only too often when we "meddled," as we were frequently accused to have done, with the practical affairs of men, which are in the nature of the case somewhat remote from the sphere of the spiritual life where we are perfectly at home.

Only in these recent years have we systematized our thoughts about these things and organized the methods of procedure and developed a strategy of attack. With due credit to Rauschenbush,

Ellwood, Ward, and others, it must be said that just in that respect German scholars have rendered us invaluable service by their tireless research and investigation. Notwithstanding the fine Christian spirit evident in the works of American students and writers on these questions, their message gained popularity by dint of their Christian emotional fervor rather than their convincing logic. It required the thorough-going and voluminous work of the German student Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen,* and his many *Aufsaetze zur Religionssoziologie* to give us the historical background for our claims of the right to speak with authority on the ethics of social phenomena. He and his school traced for us the historical roots of the right and duty of the church to serve as conscience for society, state, and industry. Then came Max Weber with his three monumental volumes on *Religionssoziologie,* in which by means of a study of comparative religion he laid bare the broad ramifications of religion into all the practical affairs of men and the manifold interrelations between religious tenets and social and economic beliefs and practises. A far flung and yet meticulously thorough and splendid piece of work.

Next in line of such ground work studies is the big volume (seven-hundred and forty octavo pages) of Professor George Wünsch of Marburg, *Evangelische Wirtschaftsethik* ("The Evangelical Economic Ethics") published in 1927 by J. C. B. Mohr, Tuebingen. Professor Wünsch, as the title of his book indicates, promises to confine his study to the field of the economic life. However, he can not deny his German training and thoroughness in his attempt to lay such a solid and indisputable foundation for what he has to say along the line of economic ethics that 270 pages alone are devoted to preliminary philosophical and theological discussions. In typical German style these preliminaries are full of *"Auseinandersetzungen"* with other scholars, past and present. Such endless disputations may be tedious for him who is not acquainted with the celebrities lined up on both sides of the arguments, but after all they are quite interesting and illuminating to him who can understandingly appreciate the position of the various authorities. In this wise he slowly but surely clears the ground and lays down the foundation for his own theories of Christian social ethics as pertaining particularly to the realm of economics.

In the philosophical discussion he brings a thorough critique of the various systems of values and develops an interesting and illuminating theory of values; in the theological discussion he develops as orientating principles for Christian social ethics the concepts of the absolute, holy, and loving God and of divine creation within which man finds his vocation. Rather strange seems to us

the author's rejection of the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount. The morality of the Sermon on the Mount is eschatological. It conflicts with the morality of the creation, which latter must correct the former. "The morality of the Sermon on the Mount, where it preaches non-resistance against evil, must be limited by the morality of creation." In tight places like this one the typically Lutheran forms and circles of argumentation, smacking decidedly of dialectic scholasticism, become evident. Along the same lines are the author's arguments when he comes to repudiate the concept of the Kingdom of God as an ethical principle of any but barely formal value. The Anglo-American and German conceptions of the Kingdom of God differ markedly as was revealed by the Stockholm Conference and the later Canterbury Colloquy on the Kingdom of God between English and German theologians (April, 1927). Because we are not in a position to see all the detailed implications of the consummated Kingdom of God, our author argues, therefore we cannot aim definitely at its realization. "Our work in the Kingdom of God can orient itself only by means of the creation and its meaning as far as it is revealed to us. This practically excludes for Christian ethics the concept of the Kingdom of God as normative" (P. 264). "To make a statement about the Kingdom of God in its consummation or about the destiny of creation is sheer presumption. Where it is being done we find ideas which man conjectures out of himself, goals which he erects himself; the product of self-will, hence in reality disobedience against God, hence sin." In other words, it is neatly made out that he who entertains the dynamic ideal of the Kingdom of God and seeks that Kingdom is a sinner, just because he cannot define in detail how and what the Kingdom actually is when it will be consummated. Too much learning maketh fearfully sophisticated and strangely impractical! It must be awful to be caught in such a vicious circle of scholasticism, behind which you can easily detect the conservatism of the traditional Lutheran moral policy. It sounds like self-criticism when Wünsch says in a lengthy footnote on the next page: "Formalism has just about become a malady of Protestantism." and then makes the observation: "We Protestant students of social ethics, in contrast to Catholic social ethics, are in the queer position of first having to wrestle for the natural and self-evident, of first having to demonstrate that what we have artificially torn to pieces naturally belongs together." Indeed, it is all a matter of "Einstellung" (an expression Germans just love to use of late), a matter of psychological complex. Our American theological complex is in that respect much like the Catholic complex. We are almost impatient with such scholastic efforts to prove what has become part and parcel of our theological mind. Especially do we feel almost

irritated when the outcome of such scholastic deduction is to rob us of what we have used as most effective means of all social ethical preaching and endeavor: the Sermon of the Mount and the concept of the Kingdom of God. Why not use the practical ethical principles of the Sermon on the Mount and the pregnant and dynamic ideal of the Kingdom of God—as Christ used them both— as directives and norms for a Christian social ethics, instead of analysing and dissecting living Christian concepts and then constructing out out of the lifeless pieces a philosophical system of ethics which, with all its symmetry, may be lacking life and power, and, in spite of theological phraseology, may be void of vision and faith.

And yet, while we deplore that the author refuses to make use of the Sermon on the Mount and the concept of the Kingdom of God as correctives and directives of man's economic pursuits, his God as ultimate norm and standard of all ethical values and judgments is after all the God as revealed in Jesus Christ and therefore the God back of every word of the Sermon on the Mount, and the God-King in whom the concept of the Kingdom focusses. Thus, in the last analysis, the direction and angle of perspective remain the same, except that we are bid to view the object of inquiry and ethical judgment from the transcendental apex of this angle.

The question is now: Does economics come within the purview of Christian ethics? The author shows that the much vaunted automony of the sphere of economics is a myth, that underlying all economical laws are ancient mores which give meaning to the whole of economic pursuit. This discussion reminds the reader very much of the opening chapter of Ward's *Our Economical Morality* and of Dr. Mecklin's analysis of the modern moral judgment in social and industrial affairs. The task of theological social ethics, according to Wünsch, is now to establish the "ought" which the Christian concept of God imposes upon the field of economics. Though business and religion seem to represent two heterogeneous areas of values, yet the integrity of man demands that they be brought into accord, rather that economic values be adjusted to the value judgments of the Christian religion. The central thesis of the book is therefore: What shall happen in the field of economical pursuit just because we believe in the Christian God?

Then Wünsch goes over the same field which Troeltsch and Max Weber have so thoroughly investigated. A historical study presents the attitudes of early Christianity, of Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and the Baptist movement toward the economic problems.

Nearly one hundred pages are devoted to the chapter on The Essence of Economy. The concept of economic value, of autono-

mous teleology of economy, especially with regard to the great Christian ideals, are very studiously analysed and clarified.

Next the economic systems of capitalism and socialism come in for an extensive study. Their strong and weak points are clearly set forth. Refreshing is the realistic treatment of these representative economic systems. It is theoretical indeed, but it does dip down at every point into the actual affairs of men for illustration and corroboration. Russia, on the one hand, and America, on the other, furnish the necessary illustrations for the economic extremes. Here Wünsch differs from both Troeltsch and Weber by refusing to stamp Calvinism as the spiritual parent of modern capitalism. "Notwithstanding Max Weber and Troeltsch there remained even in Calvinism a certain rupture between capitalism and Christianity; it was merely varnished over and in course of the later Anglo-American development it appeared only so much the more, so that today leaders in Christian social ethics both in England and America come very close to socialism" (P. 513).

This chapter on economic systems winds up with a most illuminating discussion of the burning questions, whether capitalism or socialism expresses best the Christian spirit of social ethics and which of them most easily admits the molding influence of Christian ideals. Perhaps this discussion can be considered the heart of the whole treatise; it surely reveals better than any other section of the book the personal convictions of the writer. Though the introductory discussions of the book are rather speculative and abstract, the treatment of the specific economic matter is quite practical, yes, here where the writer's own political and economic persuasion comes into play the discussion becomes even warm and fervent, though it remains scientific and objective in character.

Most interesting and striking is the peculiar new attitude of German theological thought toward the social question, reflecting the revaluation of all values through the war and the revolution. Koestlin, Kirn, Herrmann, Haering, Lemme, and the other older theological ethicists are unanimous in their apodictic condemnation of socialism. German socialism was based on a materialistic philosophy and politically opposed to the powers that be, including the official church, the handmaiden of the state. In self-defense official theological ethics had to be opposed to socialism and had to uphold capitalism and the junker and bourgeois society and state. One need but read the chapters on the state or on war and militarism or on vocation and the economic life in general in the German pre-war treatises on social ethics to be struck by the narrow, conservative ideas expressed therein—ideas which were presented with a dogmatic air of finality as if they were the ultimate

and absolute gospel truth about these subjects. For example, almost disgusting was the uncritical defense of the status quo in Professor Dr. Wendland's *Zozialethik, Die Kulturprobleme des Christentums,* published during the war. As to the economic problem, Wendland, though acknowledging the ethical shortcomings of capitalism, claims: "Capitalism can *never* (*nie und nimmer*) be ousted" (P. 108). He tries to defend the capitalistic economic system even on the basis of Christ's teachings (Matthew 25: 14-30; Luke 19: 11-27). "We need but follow the truths of this parable all the way through to their logical deductions to find in them what one could almost call a truly biblical justification of capitalism" (P. 127). And yet he says: "It is evident that the present, privately controlled organization of the economic life stands in direct opposition to the aims of Christian morality" (P. 115). But in sheer resignation bordering on cynicism he concludes: "Although the economic life of our times is diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christian love, it seems to me that a radical change of it is impossible, yea not even desirable. One must acknowledge that the Christian love of one's neighbor can never be manifested in the economic order. The economic life simply can not choose the realization of brotherly love for its goal" (P. 116).

Nevertheless, there were more hopeful and progressive theological circles even in the old state churches who were not satisfied to sidestep or straddle the social question. Some of them proposed rather conservative improvements, others quite radical solutions. We think of Friedrich Naumann who was called by the people's vote out of the ministry to serve in the Reichstag. During the war he proved one of the outstanding, sober economists and quite a champion of the common people's interests. Of great influence upon German theological thought on economic problems was the German-Swiss movement of the "Religeous-social" faction. Hermann Kutter, pastor at Zuerich, and Leonhard Ragaz, then professor of systematic and practical theology at Zuerich, must be named as the theological exponents of this movement. I don't know what reading I ever relished more than the two volumes of Ragaz, *"Weltreich, Religion und Gottesherrschaft,"* published in 1922.

In spite of Wendland's caustic criticism of Kutter and Ragaz the social ethical discussion in German theological circles refused to ignore them. The storm and stress period of the war and its dire aftermath produced as one of its practical effects an astonishing change in the thought-life of the church and its theological exponents. Truly, the Protestant church in Germany is still quite conservative and in many quarters even reactionary when it comes

to political and social attitudes. Unfortunately many of its ministers still hanker after the fleshpots of the old established state church under the direct protection of a strong monarchy, many of them being avowed adherents and even leaders of the reactionary nationalistic political parties. How this attitude of the church and its pastors has estranged the masses from the church is an old story which need not be retold here. Stockholm revealed the conservative attitude of the German churches on social ethical questions to the rest of the Christian world, but furnished also an enormous impetus to German theologs and church leaders to give the whole situation serious thought.

The dawn of a new day is breaking. With typically German thoroughness the new light is at once theoretically analyzed and dogmatically stabilized, lest it flicker and dim away. Troeltsch and Weber have done much of the theoretical ground work; Wünsch dares to make far-reaching practical applications and to erect definite ethical norms. His work amounts to a theological justification of socialism. He does not advocate a new specifically Christian economic system. "A Christian economic system would only lead us to the side of the already existing socialism; both systems would be absolutely alike, except, of course, for certain differences in the type of promotion" (P. 517). Though giving due credit to the achievements of capitalism, he comes to the conclusion that capitalism has outlived itself. He is convinced "That a socialistic economic system is much more likely to fulfill the demands Christian ethics makes upon economics than a capitalistic one" (P. 511). He believes that the humanitarian ideals of socialism and the spiritual social ideals of Christianity are in the last analysis identical. Realizing that socialism represents ideals rather than achievements and fully conscious of the technical difficulties of actualizing those ideals, he emphatically advocates that "for Christian-ethical reasons socialism must be endorsed and its realization must be sought, *as soon as the technical and organizational possibilities exist.*" Hence Christian ethics discountenances destructive revolutionary means but calls for constructive purposeful action. "Thus in economic-ethical regard socialism becomes the regulative idea. How this idea gains form can not be definitely foretold. Its historical garb will be determined by conditions at the time of its realization. Therefore its final consummation must be left to the future historical moment, yet we must gather today already such experiences as will enable us then to fashion this garb." However, Christian social ethics differs from current socialism as to motive and means of endeavor. In that respect Christian sentiment must function as refining corrective of socialistic propaganda and actions.

This principle is applied in chapters nine to twelve to various burning questions in the economic struggle. Hours of work, wages, labor struggles, property, etc—all are thoroughly discussed and their ethical implications carefully evaluated in more than 200 pages.

The last chapter is devoted to "The Present Economic Condition and the Task of the Church." We are especially interested in the last part of this double subject. Wünsch records the past failings of the Lutheran churches in that respect. The task of the church toward the economic life he summarizes thus: "The church must watch over the economic activities of the individuals and over the affairs of economic organizations and corporations, regulating them, be it through admonition and guidance, be it through moral pressure, in every case through the complete exertion of her authority." The church must be done with generalities. Through pulpit pronouncements and through official actions she must help her children and the world at large to find the way through the maze of economic problems. "It was a serious mistake on the part of Protestant social ethics, specifically that of new Lutheranism, just as it is today the mistake of dialectic theology, to leave momentous decisions without any advice from the church to the individual person. Thus an ecclesiastical-Christian social ethics became superfluous, its problems were rather simple for the church but so much the more difficult for the individual" (P. 714 and 715).

This task demands specialization on the part of individual servants or official agencies of the church. These accept the findings of the science of economics and supply the ethical consideration, motivation, and guidance. They gear into the social and political life of the nation and thus bring the influence of Christian judgment to bear upon the administration and progress of economic affairs. The church must learn the technique of political action. "There is no practical social ethics without the means of diplomacy, not even a Christian social ethics. In this respect the church must acquire the necessary art. The higher the diplomatic ability, the fairer and franker, the less crude and ruthless the play of forces" (P. 720). Here the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and its work comes in for honorary mentioning (alas, but only in a footnote!) and the churches of Germany are advised to aim at a similar institution for their country. A social ethical world-organization is also proposed, which is to serve as a clearing house and a means of unification of effort for the churches in the various countries. Thus as world-conscience the church must influence public sentiment by dint of her sober, objective judgment and her spiritual authority.

With all due respect for the monumental work of Professor Wünsch we cannot help closing this book-chat with a criticism which applies to almost all philosophical and theological works of German scholars. We refer to the utter self-sufficiency of German research and thought in the particular field of the author's studies. It seems as if German thinkers were the only ones who ever contributed anything to the study in hand. Off and on a French or an English authority is mentioned; America seems to be a terra incognita. Such an indifference to outside efforts in a particular line becomes almost irritating when the field is one like that surveyed and treated by Prof. Wünsch, in which America has done pioneer work. In all the 740 pages of his book, in spite of the endless "Auseinandersetzungen" with other authorities, the names of Walter Rauschenbush, Harry F. Ward, Charles E. Ellwood, R. H. Tawney, Kirby Page, and the host of men who have labored theoretically and practically for the social gospel, are not even mentioned. A clearer note of universality is highly desirable.

THE MINISTRY AND ORDINATION

By Professor J. E. Evjen, Ph.D., Th.D.

(Continued)

Luther Rejects Sacramental Ordination

Luther rejected this sacrament and all the hierarchic nonsense in its wake. He taught that all Christians are priests, who can present themselves as a spiritual sacrifice. He argued, they were consecrated to this priesthood, in baptism; the most important about this priesthood is to proclaim God's living Word; every every Christian has the right, or liberty, to proclaim the Word according to ability, gift, and opportunity. But Luther did not overlook the utility of the public ministry, which, indeed, was not anything higher than the universal ministry, but nevertheless a practical psychologic necessity.

According to the Roman doctrine, ordination makes a man a priest, a member of the priesthood. The ordained man is priest whether called or not called. But according to Luther one is born a priest, through the Word of God and baptism.[1] Not the ordination, but the call, makes the "priest incumbent of the office of the ministry. When he ceases to hold the public office, he is "layman" again. Thus Luther in "Concerning the Babylonian Captivity" (Ed, Clemens, 1, p. 505).

Ordination then, according to the views of Luther, consists in nothing else than being called to be the preacher of the congregation. The *Call* is the most important. The imposition of hands he regarded as a mere custom. Even his secretary, Veit Dietrich, was opposed to introducing the act of ordination, *"emphazing the genuinely evangelical conception that the orderly call is sufficient.*[2]

In addressing the Council and Community of Prague, Luther tells how a minister could be gotten: "When you, on or without request, have assembled together with all those, whose hearts have been touched by God to have a harmonious brotherhood with you, you shall go to the matter in the following way, in the name of the Lord: You shall voluntarily choose such in your midst, as you regard worthy of the work of the ministry, whereupon those that are held in highest esteem (potiores) among you shall lay hands on them, and in this way confirm them in the office and commit them to the congregation."

In this document Luther does not think of congregations or-

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[1]Luther stresses baptism and *faith*.

[2]Kolde, in Realencyclopaedie fuer Prot. Theol. und Kirche, Art. "Dietrich." IV, p. 657.

ganized on the basis of voluntaryism, organizations then practically unknown, but of the evangelical Christians in the community.[3] Those "that are held in highest esteem" are not the elders of the congregation, but most highly respected among the Christians of the community—here the Magistracy. Those chosen should be formally confirmed in the office and committed to the congregation, or church community.

This again confirms the fact that the priesthood as a special order, in contradistinction to the laity, had been abrogated, but there still was need for daily public service of the Word, and hence need for a human order, or office, to preach the Word publicly—the private proclamation of the Word being insufficient; for not everybody in the congregation could preach the recovered Gospel It was hoped by the Reformers that the bishops, still Catholic, would join the Reformation movement and thus conduct the necessary examination and perform the confirmation of ministers, even if ordination were to be discontinued. Since, however, the bishops remained Catholic, and there was, in the second decade of the Reformation, a lack of preachers leaving the Catholic Church to join the New Movement, the Reformers had to take steps to meet the situation. In 1530 Luther stated in a letter that one will have to make his own rite, appoint and install preachers. In 1539 Melanchthon and Luther discussed with the Elector to what extent the bishops (Catholic) should be tolerated.

The Practice About the Year 1535.

The Congregation Ordained

Down to the year 1535 there was no ordination in the Lutheran Church. What then might be called ordination consisted in four things: 1. The Candidate had to be examined with regard to his knowledge and ability, and had to give an account of his life. 2. He had to be called either, directly, by the congregation or indirectly by some one for the congregation; the Magistracy frequently extended the call, sometimes a patron did. 3. The person thus given a call was "confirmed" and commended to the congregation. 4. At this commendation, prayer was said for him, accompanied by the imposition of hands.

This "ordination" was as a rule performed by the local congregations themselves. Only, they let the bishops conduct the examination (item 1). But item 2 was of such an importance to Luther, that he used promiscuously the terms "call," "send," "or-

[3]The boundaries of the ecclesiastical community were not always the same as those of the civic communities. Geographical factors were decisive.

dain." When a congregation had called a person, it had therewith also ordained him. He could without further process assume the duties of office.[4] The ceremonies of items 3 and 4 were not necessary. Here and there objections were made to the imposition of hands and other ceremonies. But they had the same importance of blessing as at confirmation and at the marriage ceremony. The ministers present would lay hands on the candidate, as if to appropriate him for the clergy and recite passages from the Bible.

Luther did not regard the laying on of hands as necessary. He said it was not more necessary than it had been for the Maccabees, who were born and called to be priests, but for the sake of peace had submitted to confirmation by Antiochus and Demetrius kings of Syria, who were pure heathen and their enemies.[5] He regarded the laying on of hands (1) as a symbol that the chosen one had been formally commended to the congregation, (2) as a symbol of intercessory prayer.

"Confirmation" or "commendation" (item 3) corresponds to what our day calls installation or induction of ministers. It matters not that the installation at the start was performed by those who elected, and later by neighboring pastors.

Modern rituals vary as to the importance they attribute to installations. It happens frequently that pastors must "install themselves." In certain manuals of ritual there are prescribed forms for this self-installation. But when do we hear about self-ordination?

A clergyman installs himself by delivering a sermon, he can formally "ordain" himself in the same way. For the chief thing, as Luther says, is the call. And the call is conditioned by the examination preceding it. He who called is thereby also *ordained to preach and administer the sacraments.* Thus Luther. Only formal reasons are determinative in retaining ordination.

Ordination by Church Governments

As stated, the congregations ordained their several pastors down to 1535. In this year Elector John Friedrich authorized the theological faculty at Wittenberg to ordain candidates previously examined by superintendents (bishops) favoring the Reformation doctrine. The idea was that the example of Wittenberg would be followed by all evangelical church governments. The idea was realized. Ordination soon took place in Tuebingen, Strasburg, Magdeburg and in many other places, following the Wittenberg order.

Later, not the faculty, but the leading clergy in the evangelical Lutheran circuits had charge of ordination.

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[4]Luthers Werke. Erlangen, Ed. 31, p. 356.

[5]Erlangen —Ed. 31, p. 357.

The Pomeranian Church Order, of 1535, separated ratification from commendation. It specified that the bishop, on the basis of the examination he had conducted, should *confirm*—in the place where he was residing. The *commendation* alone became the "installation," the one elected receiving the imposition of hands from other ministers, and for some of the congregation and the "elders." Luther favored this order: the bishop should confirm, at his residence. From this time the confirmation by the church government was regarded as the real ordination. Luther later advised that the act should be done in the congregation in which the candidate was to labor. In Saxony, today having 4,500,000 Lutherans, it was the custom, just prior to the Great War, that the Superintendent (Bishop) as the representative of the church government ordained the candidate in the congregation, which he was to serve. Hesse-Darmstad tand Hesse-Kassel also observed this custom. It was preferred by Bugenhagen.

One thing was gained by having ordination performed by the church government, instead of the local congregation. Formerly the pastor had to be "ordained" everytime he took charge of a new congregation. In order to liberate the pastor and congregation from these repetitions, ordination was made a matter of the church government, which ordered that an ordination once performed should be ratified by the bishop and thus obtain for all congregations so desiring. It was a slow process to make this universal. As late as 1842 Bremen-Veden had the custom of ordaining a pastor anew everytime he got a new charge.

Another thing. There were few mature congregations in the early days of the Reformation. Most of them permitted the call of the pastor to be made by princes or magistrates. The examination conducted by the bishops was deficient. Often congregations paid no attention to items 3 and 4 as explained by Wittenberg. Many congregations secured their pastors without ordination. But many pastors, not having received ordination, suffered because of the little respect and recognition shown them. The Catholics, adhering to the mechanistic conception, to the "dingliche," naturally looked down upon them. But so did also many Protestants, trained from childhood to reverence the Roman ritual. Indeed, some of the Protestant ministers themselves were dubious as to whether they had been rightly called. Therefore—the new order

Much Was Lost by the New Order

Much was gained, much was lost by this new order. For now, ordination, in the eyes of the people, had been narrowed down to the episcopal ratification, by the laying on of hands. Formerly it meant to call one to the office of the ministry. It was forgotten

that ordination, according to Wittenberg, comprised four acts: 1. The call from the congregation. 2. Examination of doctrine. 3. Confirmation in presence of the congregation. 4. Intercessory prayer.

While Luther, as stated, emphasized the ordination so much that he could say that when a person was called by the congregation, he was already, by implication, ordained; the call being conditioned by the examination as to doctrine, ordination now got the appearance of a church ceremony. The imposition of hands became something so eminently puzzling, that many opposed it as Catholic, or as a magic act. The faculty at Wittenberg regarded it as an adiaphoron. Wuerttemberg (now 1,670,000 Lutherans) did not *ordain* its ministers before 1855. For two hundred yea this eminently prominent kingdom, now republic, and having at its University of Tuebingen the greatest enrollment (666) of theological students of all the universities in the world, observed the custom of installing the candidates examined for the office of the ministry directly without "ordaining" them. The chief concern was, that they were called by the congregation and able to perform the task alloted to them. Wuerttemberg was genuinely Lutheran in its practice.

Luther, describing evangelical worship, says: "Then our minister, bishop, or servant in the office appears before the altar, duly and honestly and publicly called, but consecrated beforehand, anointed and born as a priest of Christ, without reference to the hedge-ordination. The ordination shall and can be nothing else than a call and a command to do the work of the public ministry."[6]

The Imposition of Hands in Ordination Not Essential

"Consecrated beforehand?" Why then the imposition of hands? Rome regarded this ceremony as something mediating the power of the Holy Spirit, hence as essential. In the evangelical act of ordination the imposition of hands has quite another meaning. All of the men of the Reformation were agreed as to the fact that the laying on of hands was not an essential part of the act, but an adiaphoron, having the same meaning as it has at baptism, absolution, confirmation, and solemnization of marriage; as when "a notary and witness give testimony in a secular matter; a minister invokes the blessing for bride and bridegroom, confirms their marriage and testifies that they had taken each other as man and wife and had made public confession of this." But the imposition of hands has been a public token of the ordered office of preaching. But not this alone. Under its use God has been petitioned to en-

[6]Erlangen Ed. 31, p. 348.

lighten, direct, and lead such chosen persons for the welfare of the Church—by the Holy Spirit.[7]

[7]The Old Testament mentions the imposition of hands on the heads of the one to whom an office was transferred, only once. It was the occasion of Joshuas being called to be the successor to Moses (Numbers 27, 18-23; Dt. 34, 9). The imposition of hands was the means whereby the spirit and exaltedness of Moses was transferred to Joshua—like lighting a torch with a burning torch, or pouring the contents out of a vessel into another. This answers to a technical ordination. The Jews followed this custom in ordaing priests and judges. But in the age of Talmud this custom was no longer observed. Some think that the respect of early Christians for this custom turned the Jews against it. If three members among the Jews ordained, one did the presiding, the two others were witnesses. The ordained got three things: the title of Rabbi, got his name inscribed in the book of matriculation, and the right to decide as a teacher and judge independently on religious legal questions (ritual) and criminal questions. Ordination could cover only a part of this, when specified. In the third century the Jews would select the person to be ordained from the learned disciples, for ordination. The candidate had to be able to write, butcher, and circumcise and if need be, to read the verse of praise at the celebration of marriages. (H. L. Strack and P. Billebeck, Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas . . . erlaütert aus Talmud und Midrasch, Munich 1924, II 647 seq.)

This conception has been and is the usual one among Protestants. But Neo-Lutherans like Loehe, Kliefoth and Zezschwitz ascribed to the laying on of hands an essential significance at ordination.[8] They assigned to it a sacramental effect, and taught

[8]Scores of well-known theologians, particularly of England and America, have been quoted as to the meaning of the imposition of hands, in Dexter's Congregationalism, 1865, and Hiscox, The New Baptist Directory, (1894) . . See also G. Rietschel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik, 1909, II and E. Chr. Achelis, Lehrbuch der praktischen Theologie, 1911, I; especially Behm, Die Handauflegung im Urchristentum, 1911. See also R. G. G. 2 ed. II, Article, Handauflegung, by Behm and Glaue.

Behm thinks it mediates a special spiritual equipment for the work to be done by the canidatde, or, in baptism imparts the Spirit, the principle of all personal Christianity. He explains that, according to the concrete thinking of antiquity, the process of the imparting of the spirit was conceived as a sensuous-real event, but not, however magic-sacramental.

Glaue, showing that the imposition of hands is very usual in connection with liturgical acts like baptism, confirmation, ordination, marriage, private confession, says, it is not found in all agendas, where the benediction is substituted. He says, magic ideas, as if it mediates magic powers, and every mechanistic interpretation of it, must be un-

conditionally rejected, as Luther did reject them. Glaue adds, that the efforts, in the opposite direction, of the *Neo Lutherans* and *High church* people, are due to a *Romanizing conception of the office of ministry*, as if it, on the basis of successio-transmission, possesses a special official grace or virtue. This too must be rejected. "Nowhere in the evangelical church is any special importance ascribed to the laying on of hands. In the church orders of the sixteenth century it is called an adiaphoron. According to evangelical view it can only express in a symbolical way that the intercession for the candidate is especially for him. (R. G. G. II 2 ed., 1607, seq.)

that it is the laying on of hands that makes the intercessory prayer effective, and mediates directly a supernatural gift, without which ordination is ineffective. This Romanizing tendency thus makes the ceremony something essential, imparting grace, and guaranteeing the grace of the office.

The Call is Essential

The essential thing about ordination, according to Luther's views, however is the call (and examination). He was little concerned about the rest. He retained the confirmation with the laying on of hands and prayer, in order that the public might know who was capable of holding the office of the public ministry. For even in his day there were many itinerant preachers, neither called nor capable, who believed they were spiritual and got many adherents. There were also many preachers who could not preach, but read sermons from postilles. Only a minority had what we would call a college training, and many studied theology only for a few weeks. There were also many ignorant catholic priests who were indifferent to doctrine, as long as they got a charge. Then the enthusiasts who, in the belief they possessed the Spirit, did not condescend to page a Bible. In view of all this, some control was needed. Unfortunately it became a bureaucratic state control, against Luther's wish. The bishop and the rest of the clergy became *officials of the state*, and had to take an oath at the accession to the office—a custom still observed even by some free church bodies in America, indeed a sincerely motivated ceremonial, but hardly more appropriate than a crown and throne for a United States President.

Formulary of Authorization

The state-church order with regard to ordination is celebrated every summer in American Church bodies. The zenith of synodical meetings seems to be ordination. The *Ordinator*, who may be the bishop, or president, or a special person appointed to ordain, often uses a ritual like this:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I now commit unto thee the holy Office of the Ministry,

with power and authority, as a true servant of God and of Jesus Christ, do declare God's Word both publicly and privately, to administer the sacrements according to Christ's Institution, to bind sin into the obstinate, and to loose it unto the penitent and otherwise to perform whatever belongeth to thy sacred calling according to the Word of God and the regulation of our Church."

This formulary makes the presiding minister a sort of consecrating bishop. Its language is suggestive of an hierarchic order, imparting authority, not only *formaliter,* but *realiter.* But this authority every Christian has *realiter.* As Luther said, A Christian can never open his mouth without speaking an absolution.

The formulary is more in harmony with conditions where a minister is a state official, or an official of state and church jointly, than where he is the servant of a free congregation. How impressive, almost forbidding, it is compared to the simple form suggested in William B. Barton's A Congregational Manual 1911, p. 223: "We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part with us in the ministry." The latter may seem colorless. Either will suffice if understood in the evangelical meaning. Even this form, a usual part of the ceremony in the days of the Reformation, may possess some value: "Hear ye: that we preachers and pastors have been called not to take care of geese and cows, but of this congregation." Perhaps the negative in this could be profitably changed so as to meet a salvation today: that preachers are not sent to deliver essays in the pulpit, or after-dinner speeches in clubs, to act as masters of ceremonies, to be business managers or advertising agents. The main thing is that the congregation understands why it has a preacher. Hence public ordination was, in the days of the Reformation, and is, in our day, preferable to private ordination, which is practically meaningless.

Whether the candidate is ordained by a local church or at a synodic assembly, is religiously of no consequence. Ordination by a synod gives the candidate greater public recognition. The call of the congregation gives him the formal rights to exercise his publicly recognized ability in its midst. *Realiter* he has the right to use his gifts of grace, wherever he has opportunity and wherever his gift is recognized, all due profitable order being observed.

Luther's Simple Formulary

The act of ordination has become so complicated that Luther, were he to reappear, would hardly recognize it to-day. How simple his ritual of ordination is.[10] One can read it in three minutes.

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[9]The Orders of Service and Ministerial Acts of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, 1902.

[10]Erlangen Ed., 60, 29 seq.

It has no address to the candidates to be ordained, only a few passages from scripture, a prayer with the imposition of hands, and a question, which the candidate answers with a yes. It proclaims no transfer of the office with "power and authority," but a plain, evangelical statement. Why so plain? Luther and the conception which his colleague expressed in "Appendix to the Schmalkald Articles": "Formerly the people elected pastors and bishops. Then the bishop was added, either of that church or a neighboring one, who confirmed the one elected (episopus) by the laying on of hands. *Ordination* was then nothing else than such a *ratification* (comprobatio).[11]

The Freder-Knipstro Controversy

A controversy about the middle of the sixteenth century showed how this statement of Melanchthon was confirmed and applied. We are referring to the Freder-Knipstro controversy. Johann Freder, pastor in Hamburg 1540-47 was called by the council of Stralsund to become its superintendent (bishop). As such it was to be a part of his duty to examine, ordain, and install the city clergy. When he had been made a minister at Hamburg, the laying on of hands had been omitted in his case, due to consideration for the Domherrn at the Cathedral where he was to function. They were Catholics. He had been properly called, and intercession had been duly made for him from the pulpit when he took over his office. Being now called to Stralsund, the General Superintendent Knipstro demanded that he receive of his hand what he was lacking—ordination. This demand was of a theological and church political nature, the General-superintendent wanting the Superintendent of the city Stralsund to be under his jurisdiction. Stralsund, mindful of its rights, forbade the ordination, which was not performed, because Freder lost his office in 1549 due to resisting the Interim. He became professor in Greifswald, and at the same time superintendent (bishop) in Ruegen. But Ruegen in 1543 had been made ecclesiastically dependent on Denmark. A Danish bishop thus would have to confirm him. Knipstro had visited Denmark in order to get the necessity of such confirmations abrogated. Finding his visit in vain, he inducted Freder, without ordination, but in the name of his duke, into his office: the confirmation of the Danish bishop not being desired. Christian III of Denmark protested, even talked of a *casus belli*. Bishop Palladius of Denmark demanded that Freder personally appear before him to receive ordination.

Now Knipstro asserted his dogmatic misgivings. How could Freder an unordained man, ordain anybody else? Knipstro and

[11] Book of Concord, edited by Mueller-Kolde, 10 ed., p. 342.

Freder soon faced each other as polemicists. Freder claimed that the imposition of hands was an adiaphoron; as a fine custom, it should not be omitted, but it was not necesary where forced circumstances dictated that it be left undone. Knipstro, in rather offensive language declared that one cannot give what he does not have. The Duke tried to make the two come to an agreement.

Then Freder appealed to the faculty at Wittenberg. In February, 1551, it declared, through Melanchthon and Bugenhagen, that the (1) election of the person, (2) the examination of his doctrine, (3) the induction, (4) with prayers constitute ordination. The laying on of hands was a praiseworthy custom, but subject to change. Where this custo mwas not in use, the ministry was efficient without it. This decision favored Freder, who however went to Denmark to get the ordination—a church political move, not motivated by any feeling of religious necessity. Being under Danish jurisdiction ecclesiastically, Freder now lost his professorship, but retained his episcopal office in Ruegen. The two polemicists signed a peace document in 1553. But Freder soon felt that his conscience was hurt by this act, and protested in print against the statement in the document that ordination is necessary for church offices. Knipstro replied. A number of theological opinions were solicited from theologians. The Wittenbergers said no real doctrinal difference was implied in the controversy; but Freder had, because the imposition of hands was an adiaphoron, made the false deduction that the necessity of the entire ecclesiastical order had to be opposed. But this order was an indispensable protection against deceivers and such as had no examination. Freder now appealed to a synod of Greifswald, 1556, which, however, gave him no redress. He was the victim of personal differences and a territorial dispute: It was unnatural for the Germans to regard the superintendent of Ruegen as subject to the Danish Ecclesiastical government.[12]

Ordination a Publication of Approbation

When Melanchthon, stating his opinion in this case, said that ordination consisted of four things, he added that Luther had laid in the hands of the congregation the call and likewise the public *ratification,* as a public rite announcing that the candidate had been examined by the servants of the congregation. He regarded it as fitting that one called was inducted into office through some public custom, where prayer was offered. In a church order of 1552, of which Melanchthon was a joint author, we read: Or-

[12]Art. Knipstro, by Kawerau, in Herzog-Hauck, P. R. E. Art. Freder, by Koehler, in R. G. G. II.

dination is a public testimony from the churches that the person in question has been called and has received an order to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. In 1552 Melanchthon called ordination not approbation, but *publication of the approbation.*

Martin Chemnits (b. 1522) wrote: Because of those that are running about without having been sent, the call should have the public testimony of the congregation. Leonard Hutter, like Melanchthon, regarded the ordination not as a ratification, but as a public proclamation of the ratification by the congregation: "Ordination is nothing else than a declaration and, at the same time, a public proclamation of the call already extended. It does not make anyone a minister or preacher; as, not the coronation, but the real election makes one a king or emperor. Coronation is only the public proclamation of the election preceding it."

The theological faculty in Rostock declared that ordination is a "public testimony," but added that in some places of Germany "this testimony is given without ordination."

American Endorsements

There is genuine pleasure in seeing these ideas of the Reformation essentially sanctioned in an American work from the pen of a Congregationalist:

"It does not matter what the ministry may be—pastors, elders, deacons, Sunday-school superintendents,—it does not matter how many ministers there are in any particular church, or whether their service is professional or voluntary . . . The ministry . . . is nothing less and can be nothing more than a rank of service . . . One is qualified for it by gifts, by training, by experience; these, on the Christian doctrine of the Spirit, constitute his inward call. But he enters on it only through the call of some Christian company, itself presumptively an act in which Christ's Spirit was concerned. Imposition of hands is the recognition of this double call, the solemn setting apart of a man chosen by a particular church to be its spiritual shepherd and administrative head. This act confers on him no gifts he did not have before.

"It is simply for the time being and for the sake of order and efficiency. It does not per se relieve the other Christians of their priestly functions. When occasion requires, any member of the church may be appointed to administer the sacraments, or preach, or preside.

"We need a revision of terms. 'Ordination', with its implication of an *ordo clericalis*, should be replaced by some term signifying installation in an office or service. There should be no distinction in term or form between a man's formal induction into the ministry of his first church, and his later induction into the ministry of another church. The act is essentially the same, whatever differences may be necessary in the previous examination."

The author thinks we must revive the practice of a formal installation at each entrance on a ministry. This may not matter much, but his claim that for a council to confine the imposition of hands to its ministerial members is fraught with the gravest dangers—, is worth a great deal of consideration. "In each Christian community, let the 'laymen'—here again we need a revision of terms—insist upon their rights."

The insistence may not matter so much as the understanding that the hands of the clergy mean religiously nothing more than the hands of laymen.

The author does not object to reordination, since ordination is not for life, but he finds it is more practical to abide by one ordination in order to insure the ministry as a profession, as well as a calling. Ordination is a certain guarantee of fitness. So much harm has been done by tramp preachers that a certified record is of the utmost importance.

"'Ordination' . . . can not make a minister. Nothing will do that but actual ministration. Whoever ministers is a minister, wherever, to whomsoever, and with or without previous formalities. But he must be ministering . . .

"'Instead of examined for ordination' we suggest the term 'examined for the ministry', and instead of 'ordained to the ministry' the term 'accredited to minister in the churches.'"

A revision of terms may not be needed as much as a revision of thinking in terms of high church to terms of evangelical church. A modified practice would do no harm. The imposition of hands by a layman may not profit the layman, if he does not understand what he is doing. It may create spiritual pride. On the other hand, a layman's participating in an ordination may evoke an intelligent question as to Why or Why not he should do this.

Luther permitted laymen to participate. In the New England states this custom was much in use in the seventeenth century. German Bremen-Verden practiced it to 1842. Punchard defends this custom, though he admits that "few would now approve of lay ordination and I am not sure but that some would consider it invalid."

How ordination differs entirely from any hierarchic consecration will be seen fully, when ordination is no longer separate from the induction into office. Ordination will then be regarded as the first installation. If ordination and installation (or induction) are not considered as being on a par, ordination will be regarded as conveying a spiritual quality instead of being the allotment of a task, or assignment of a field, by the congregation—a task to serve it in public capacity.

The matter will be clarified by adopting the teaching of Luther that the call is really the ordination. Then the purely ceremonial ordination becomes something quite subordinate, not more necessary than the coronation ceremonies for a king, or the handing out of a diploma to the one who has passed an examination. The conferring of a diploma at a commencement makes the recipient neither greater nor abler than he was immediately after having passed the examination for it. A coronation makes the king no abler than he was at his election. But the coronation, the conferring of the diploma gives publicity. It is similar with the ordination of a minister.

These ideas are not new. Cotton Mather, in his day, said about some Americans of Old: "They reckoned not Ordination to be essential unto the vocation of a minister, any more than coronation to the being of a king: but that it is only a consequent and convenient adjunct of his vocation, and a solemn acknowledgment of it, with an useful and proper benediction of him in it."

Another of the old Puritans in our country told the following about Scotland in 1648: "The church of Scotland is so far from conceiving laying on of hands necessary in ordination, that they not only not use it, but judge it unlawful to be used, unless some special considerations be attended."

Scores of testimonials to the same effect are given by Henry M. Dexter in "Congregationalism," 1868, pp. 136-145; Edward T. Hiscox in, "The New Directory for Baptist Churches," 1894 pp. 350-381; George T. Ladd in, "The Principles of Church Polity," 1882, pp. 227-237.

To these testimonies, quoted or referred to, we may add a few from the Scandinavian countries.

Christentum und Geschichte.

Von Prof. Dr. Grützmacher.

I.

In der zweiten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts machten die Naturwissenschaften den Versuch, sich als einzige Wissenschaftsform aufzuspielen. Sie suchten sich die Geisteswissenschaften nach Stoff und Methode zu unterwerfen; die Psychologie sollte wesentlich materiell aufgefaßte Seelenvorgänge gesetzmäßig untersuchen, in der Geschichte sollten notwendig sich vollziehende wirtschaftliche Vorgänge das Rückgrat bilden. In verfeinerter Form huldigte auch ein Historiker wie der verstorbene Leipziger Professor Lamprecht einer naturalistischen Geschichtsbetrachtung, wenn er den Blick nur auf die kollektiven Vorgänge in der Geschichte richtete, die in festen Stufen aufeinander folgen sollten. Selbst bei Spengler lebt in seinem eigenen Gedankenkreis, der sich die Geschichte wie natürliche Jahreszeiten entwickeln läßt, eine solche die Geschichte der Natur angleichende Betrachtungsweise fort. Gegen diese Auffassung erhob sich zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts eine Bewegung, welche für **die Selbständigkeit und Eigenart der Geisteswissenschaften** eintrat. Sie wurde besonders von den beiden Heidelberger Philosophen, dem verstorbenen Windelband und dem jetzt noch wirkenden Rickert geführt. Sie zeigten durchschlagend, wie die Geisteswissenschaften einen besondern Gegenstand haben, die **Kultur** — nicht die Natur — und eine besondre Methode, die **idiographisch-individualisierende,** nicht die generalisierend gesetzmäßige.

Die Kultur ruht gewiß auf der Natur und infolgedessen bestehen auch gewisse Zusammenhänge zwischen den Kultur- und Naturwissenschaften. Spielt sich doch jedes Stück Geschichte auf einem bestimmten geographischen Boden in einem besondern Klima ab. Das gilt auch für die Religions- einschließlich der Christentumsgeschichte. Jesus konnte sein besonderes Wanderleben nur führen auf dem Boden und in dem heißen Klima Palästinas. Aber Kultur ist vor allen Dingen Umschaffung der Natur und Herstellung rein geistiger Gebilde wie des Staates, der Kunst, Sittlichkeit, Philosophie, Religion kraft einer besondern Betätigung des menschlichen Willens. Diese Besonderheiten der Kultur zu erfassen, ist die eigentliche Aufgabe der geistigen Kulturwissenschaften. Innerhalb der Kultur lassen sich voneinander sondern: der schöpferische menschliche Geist, der sich wesentlich gleichbleibt, und seine wechselnden objektiven Schöpfungen. Die Untersuchung des menschlichen Geistes kommt der **Philosophie** zu; sie beschreibt seine seelischen Fähigkeiten in der Psychologie, seine Erkenntniskraft in der Erkenntnistheorie, seine sittlich-rechtlichen Fähigkeiten in Ethik und Rechtsphilosophie, seine

künstlerischen in der Aesthetik, seine religiösen in der Religionsphilosophie. Aus allen diesen geistigen Anlagen und Kräften sind aber die verschiedensten Erscheinungen erwachsen. Die Ergebnisse der menschlichen Erkenntnis haben sich, wie die Entwicklung der Wissenschaft zeigt, stetig gewandelt. Der sittlich rechtliche Trieb hat die verschiedensten Sitten und eine große Reihe von Staatsformen erzeugt. Die Kunst ist in allen Jahrhunderten eine andre gewesen, ja selbst die Religion hat sich in eine Vielzahl von Religionsbildungen zerlegt. **Diesen Wandel und Wechsel der kulturellen Formen zu beschreiben und zu verstehen, ist die Aufgabe der Geschichtswissenschaft. Ihr Interesse ist darum auf das Einmalige und Besondere, das Individuelle gerichtet.** Die Besonderheit der antiken Kriegsführung, Staatsform, Sitte, Religion, beschreibt der Historiker der Antike. Die Eigenart des Mittelalters auf allen Gebieten nach vorwärts und rückwärts sucht die geschichtliche Forschung herauszuarbeiten. Der Literarhistoriker unterstreicht die Unterscheidungsmerkmale der klassisch deutschen Dichtung. Infolgedessen kann man mit Rickert zusammenfassend die **Geschichte als „individualisierende Kulturwissenschaft"** charakterisieren.

Der Geschichtsforscher begnügt sich aber nicht damit, geschichtliche Tatsachen in ihrer Vereinzelung darzustellen, sondern er sucht auch ihre Zusammenhänge zu ermitteln — etwa in der Staatengeschichte die Aufeinanderfolge der verschiedenen asiatischen Reiche und ihre Ausmündung in das „imperium Romanum" verständlich zu machen. Der Geschichtsschreiber stellt einen Entwicklungszusammenhang her und zwar nicht nur wie der Naturforscher durch Nachweis des kausalen Zusammenhanges das heißt der Bedingtheit des Folgenden durch das Vorhergehende, sondern auch durch den Blick auf die Ziele, denen eine bestimmte geschichtliche Entwicklung zustrebt das heißt durch die teleologische Betrachtungsweise. Spengler bringt Einheit in das moderne geschichtliche Geschehen durch die Behauptung, daß alles auf den Untergang des Abendlandes hin zielt. Aus dieser Feststellung ergibt sich in welchen Maße **persönliche und philosophische Ueberzeugungen in die Geschichtsdarstellung eingreifen.** Schon die Auswahl und Bewertung der Quellen bringt ein gewisses subjektives Element, das sich bedeutend steigert, wenn etwa eine große Persönlichkeit in ihrer Bedeutung dargestellt werden soll. Handelt es sich aber gar um neuere politische Geschichte zum Beispiel des Weltkrieges, so greifen ganz bestimmt nationale Ueberzeugungen in seine Darstellung ein. Erst recht ist der Begriff einer „Weltgeschichte" mindestens in gleichem Maße eine Schöpfung der Philosophie wie der exakten Geschichtswissenschaft. **In jeder geschichtlichen Darstellung und zwar je bedeutsamer und umfassender ihr Gegenstand ist, steckt ein gut Stück Philosophie** — eine Erkennt-

nis, die von größter Bedeutung für die Verhältnisbestimmung von Christentum und Geschichte werden wird.

II.

Zwischen der Geschichte und der **Religion im Allgemeinen** brauchen keine näheren Beziehungen zu bestehen. In reinen **Naturreligionen** wie den animistisch-fetischistischen, aber auch in den meisten polytheistischen fehlt eine Beziehung zur Geschichte. Wo sich die Gottheit im Rauschen heilger Bäume offenbart, wo Sonnenauf- und untergang die tiefsten religiösen Gefühle auslöst, handelt es sich um immer wiederkehrende geschichtslose Naturerscheinungen. Auch die alten germanischen Götter waren keine Geschichtswesen, sondern wurden erlebt in Sturm, Donner und Blitz. Allein auch der höhere Typus einer **mystischen Religiosität** verhält sich neutral zu der Geschichte. Kann ich unmittelbar in meinem Seelengrund das Göttliche finden und dadurch mit der Gottheit in Verkehr treten, dann bedarf es keiner Geschichtsfakta, um meine Frömmigkeit hervorzurufen. Alle mystische Religion ist zeitlos und geschichtslos — das heißt besonders deutlich die indische Religiosität. Die Versenkung in das Ewig-Eine vollzieht sich überall und zu jeder Zeit. Sobald die Mystik in einer geschichtlichen Religion überhand nimmt, löst sie deren historischen Bestandteile mehr oder minder radikal auf — das lehrt gerade auch die Christentumsgeschichte. Endlich fehlt in der Religionsform, in welcher die **Vernunft** die Oberhand gewinnt die Beziehung zur Geschichte. Denn die Vernunft erscheint sowohl als theoretische wie als praktische als angeboren und unveränderlich. Wer die Religion auf Vernunftwahrheiten begründet oder in ihnen bestehen läßt, gebraucht sich um die Geschichte nicht zu kümmern. Infolgedessen sind Zeiten, welche den Vernunftscharakter der Religion betonten wie der Rationalismus des 18. Jahrhunderts gleichgültig gegen die Geschichte gewesen. Das hat besonders Lessing in dem bekannten Satz ausgesprochen, daß zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten nicht ewige Vernunftwahrheiten begründen könnten. Und Kant hat geradezu alle historischen Elemente der Religion in rationale verwandelt.

Geschichte und Religion berühren sich erst in einer solchen Religion, die sich auf einen bestimmten Ausschnitt der Geschichte stützt und in ihm ihre geschichtliche Entstehung, wie ihren dauernden Offenbarungsgrund sieht. Sobald eine Religion auf eine bestimmte Geschichtstatsache verweist, aus denen sie entsprungen ist und dieser dauernden Offenbarungswert zuweist, sind Beziehungen und damit auch die Möglichkeit von Konflikten mit der Geschichte und ihrem wissenschaftlichen Verständnis gegeben. **In diesem Sinn ist das Christentum eine eminent geschichtliche Religion, indem es sich auf einen bestimmten geschichtlichen Stifter zurückführt und zugleich be-**

hauptet, daß in seiner und in der ihr vorangehenden alttestamentlichen und ihr nachfolgenden apostolischen Geschichte eine besondre Offenbarung Gottes erfolgt ist. Durch diese Geschichte und das von ihr kündende Wort vollzieht sich im Christentum dauernd die lebendige Verbindung mit Gott. Zu Niemandem kommt Gott und Niemand gelangt zu Gott, es sei denn durch den geschichtlichen Christus. **Für seine geschichtliche Begründung und Erhaltung nimmt das Christentum Besonderheit, Einzigartigkeit, Absolutheit in Anspruch.** Das Christentum leugnet nicht, daß auch seine Urgeschichte ein Bestandteil allgemeiner Welt- und Kulturgeschichte ist, aber es behauptet zugleich, daß diese Geschichte Transparent einer ewigen Welt ist. Seine Ursachen lassen sich damit letztlich nicht aus der vorangegangenen innerweltlichen Geschichte ableiten, sondern nur aus einer unmittelbar aus der Ewigkeit herauswirkenden Kraft. Christliches Ziel ist nicht nur, die allgemeine Menschheitsgeschichte in der Zeit vorwärtszuführen, sondern vor allem jeden Einzelnen überwärts in die Ewigkeit zu geleiten. **In dem Begriff der Offenbarungs- und Heilsgeschichte ist die charakteristische Stellung des Christentums zur Geschichte in einer kurzen Formel zusammen gefaßt.**

III.

Ist durch die voranstehenden Ausführungen die enge und besondre Verbindung des Christentums mit der Geschichte festgestellt, so scheint sich daraus nicht notwendig ein **Konflikt** mit der allgemeinen Geschichte zu ergeben. Tatsächlich hat auch Jahrhunderte hindurch ein solcher Gegensatz nicht bestanden. Im Gegenteil schien **Christentum und Weltgeschichte in Harmonie zu stehen.** Diese aber kam dadurch zu Stande, daß man die allgemeine Geschichte nach spezifisch alttestamentlich-christlichen Gesichtspunkten verstand. Lange Zeit bildete die Weissagung Daniels von den verschiedenen Weltreichen und dem sie ablösenden Gottesreich das allgmeine Schema für die gesamte Geschichte. Paulus behandelte die heidnische und jüdische Geschichte als eine negative Vorbereitung des Christentums, nicht minder die altchristlichen Apologeten. Augustin kannte nur eine doppelte Geschichte, die der „civitas dei" und einer „civitas diaboli," die zwar antithetisch, aber ganz aufeinander bezogen verliefen. Auch die mittelalterliche und altreformatorische Geschichtsbetrachtung stand entschieden unter religiösen Gesichtspunkten wie unter dem des tausendjährigen Reiches aus der Apocalypse.

Ein Konflikt zwischen Christentum und Geschichte entstand erst in dem Augenblick, wo die christliche Weltanschauung aufhörte die allgemein herrschende zu sein und in der Wissenschaft andre Gedankengänge einsetzten und allmählich die Vorherrschaft gewannen. Das ist etwa seit Beginn des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts der Fall. Seit dieser Zeit hat sich **die moderne historische Mtehode gebildet und**

ist im Gegensatz zu der spezifisch christlichen Geschichtsbetrachtung getreten. Die Eigentümlichkeit der modernen historischen Methode hat zu Anfang des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts der verstorbene Theologe und Philosoph Tröltsch besonders scharf herausgearbeitet und in Konkurrenz zum Christentum gestellt. Nach ihm enthält sie die **dreierlei Grundsätze der Kritik, der Analogie und der Wechselwirkung zwischen allen Geschichtsvorgängen.** Danach gibt es für die moderne historische Methode kein Geschichtsgeschehen, welches an und für sich zuverlässig, autoritativ, absolut ist, sondern jedes unterliegt in gleichem Maße der Kritik. Diese sondert das Wahre vom Unwahren, das Tatsächliche vom Mythos, um einen nur relativ gültigen, vergänglichen Tatsachenkern herauszuarbeiten. Bei dieser Kritik bedient sie sich besonders des Grundsatzes der Analogie. Alle Vorgänge der Vergangenheit müssen analog denen der Gegenwart gedeutet werden. Nur dieselben Kräfte, die heute in der Menschenwelt wirksam sind, können auch in der Vergangenheit tätig gewesen sein. Erscheinen völlig eigenartige Faktoren in früheren Geschichtsberichten, so sollen diese von vornherein unglaubwürdig sein. Endlich nimmt die moderne historische Methode an, daß alles Geschehen in gleichartiger Wechselwirkung steht. Jede Erscheinung in der Geschichte hängt mit allen andern zusammen; es kann keine Veränderung an einer Stelle geben, die sich nicht überall bemerkbar machte. In der Geschichtskette ist Ring an Ring geschmiedet und zwar überall von den gleichen Kräften.

Diese Grundsätze sind in der Tat geeignet, die schwersten Konflikte mit der christlichen Annahme einer besondern Heilsgeschichte hervorzurufen. Denn diese wird nicht mehr als eine autoritativ gegebene Größe von besonderm Charakter angenommen, sondern einer zersetzenden und relativierenden Kritik unterworfen. Indem diese sich des Grundsatzes der Analogie bedient, wird in der Heilsgeschichte alles Außerordentliche und Wunderbare, was sich nicht in der Gegenwart wiederholt, ausgeschieden. Endlich wird durch die restlose Einstellung in die allgemeine Weltgeschichte der Offenbarungsgeschichte ihre Sonderstellung nach Ursprung und Gehalt genommen. **Tatsächlich haben zahlreiche moderne Darstellungen der christlichen Geschichte den Offenbarungscharakter, teilweise sogar jeden Geschichtscharakter abgesprochen.** Auf Jesus angewandt ergibt diese Methode, daß er ein Mensch war wie andre Menschen, der höchstens noch — den auch sonst vorkommenden — Helden der Geschichte eingereiht werden darf. Es sei nur an die verschiedenen Biographien von David F. Strauß über Renan bis zur modernsten des „Menschensohnes" von Emil Ludwig erinnert. Da aber in der christlichen Ueberlieferung das Wunderbare so eng mit dem Geschichtlichen verbunden ist, sind andre Historiker und Philosophen

konsequent noch einen Schritt weiter gegangen. Sie haben in der geschichtlichen Ueberlieferung über Jesus die Erfaßbarkeit eines historischen Kernes auch im profanhistorischen Sinn geleugnet, ja positiv behauptet: „Jesus hat nicht gelebt," wie A. Drews in Karlsruhe. Damit aber ist der allerschwerste Konflikt zwischen Christentum und Geschichte entstanden, der an Bedeutsamkeit noch den Gegensatz zur Naturwissenschaft übertrifft. **Die moderne historische Methode lehnt eine besondre christliche Heilsgeschichte ab, ja gefährdet sogar deren profangeschichtliche Tatsächlichkeit.**

IV.

Dieser Konflikt ist von christlicher und theologischer Seite nicht dadurch zu lösen, **daß man die geschichtlichen Elemente im Christentum als religiös gleichgültig zurückstellt oder als ganz unbedeutend aufgibt.** In dieser Linie hatte sich schon die Apologetik der Ritschlschen Schule bewegt, in deren Sinn H. Schulz in seinem Grundriß der Apologetik formuliert hatte: „Es handelt sich für den Glauben an den geschichtlichen Christus garnicht um ein Urteil über eine Frage der Geschichtswissenschaft, etwa um die Probleme, mit denen sich die Wissenschaft von Leben Jesu zu beschäftigen hat. Es handelt sich überhaupt nicht um Etwas, was die wissenschaftliche Kritik in Zweifel ziehen könnte, um etwas bloß Vergangenes. Vielmehr um eine wirkende Persönlichkeit, die sich als lebendige in die geistige Geschichte der Menschheit eingeprägt hat und deren Wirklichkeit ein Jeder durch ihre Wirkungen ebenso gegenwärtig an sich erproben kann, wie die Wirklichkeit der Natur und der Gemeinschaften, in denen er steht." Allein die Wirkungen, die von Christus ausgehen, sind doch nur dann als **seine** Wirkungen anzusehen, wenn er selbst eine festumrissene geschichtliche Persönlichkeit war, und können nur unter dieser Voraussetzung zum Glauben an ihn und den sich in ihm offenbarenden Gott führen. Ist Christus dagegen geschichtswissenschaftlich nicht als historische Persönlichkeit erwiesen oder gar das Gegenteil festgestellt, so gehen alle gegenwärtigen religiösen Wirkungen nur auf die Schöpfer der Christuslegende zurück, genau wie die noch immer dauernden Eindrücke der homerischen Götter nur auf den Dichter Homer, nicht aber auf die Gestalten jener Götter zurückführen.

Auch die religionsgeschichtliche Theologie, die zunächst alles Gewicht auf den historischen Jesus gelegt hatte, hat zuletzt vor der historischen Kritik kapituliert. Erklärte doch Bousset in einem Vortrag über „Die Bedeutung der Person Jesu" 1910: „Wir brauchen das mögliche Resultat historischer Forschung, das uns die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit Jesu im engeren Sinn an vielen Punkten unerkennbar, unrettbar verloren bleibt, nicht mehr zu fürchten. Es kommt auf das Symbol, das Bild selbst an. Das Bild Jesu, als

Dichtung und Wahrheit, bleibt wirksamer als alle historisch noch so genauen Rekonstruktionsversuche." Danach würde der christliche Glaube zum guten Teil auf Dichtung beruhen und infolgedessen auch nur als Dichtung zu bewerten sein. — Selbst in der positiven Theologie zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhundert läßt sich ein gewisses Zurückweichen vor den Angriffen des Historismus nicht verkennen. So hat zum Beispiel Stange — neben ganz anders lautenden Ausführungen — erklärt, daß alle geschichtlichen Religionen nur Einkleidungen des religiösen Erlebnisses sind, „das man nicht aus ihnen, sondern immer nur aus dem Zusammenhang des menschlichen Bewußtseins gewinnen kann." Auch bei dem Erlanger Frank — im Unterschied zu Hofmann — tritt die Geschichte zurück hinter der lebendigen Erfahrung und den metaphysischen Glaubensideen, während die Geschichte nur die Brücke zwischen beiden bildete. **Die Eigenart der christlichen Religion und Weltanschauung besteht aber in einer unauflöslichen Synthese zwischen Geschichte und Metaphysik, Zeitlichem und Ewigem, Menschlichem und Göttlichem — unter voller Gleichwertigkeit beider Seiten.**

V.

Infolgedessen kann der Konflikt zwischen Christentum und Geschichte nicht defensiv durch Preisgabe der Offenbarungsgeschichte, sondern nur offensiv **durch Kritik an der modernen historischen Methode** gelöst werden — im Rückgriff auf die eingangs angestellten Betrachtungen über das Wesen der Geschichte. Diese Methode ist in Wirklichkeit kein unfehlbares allgemeingültiges Verfahren, sondern Ausfluß einer philosophischen Weltanschauung, die vom Christentum absieht und darum seine geschichtlichen Grundlagen zersetzen muß. Jede Geschichtsbetrachtung — so sahen wir in unserm ersten Abschnitt — ist subjektiv durch die Stellungnahme des betreffenden Historikers bedingt. Mit Recht sagt darum Bernheim in seinem berühmten „Lehrbuch der historischen Methode": „Was wir als Hauptresultat der Kulturentwicklung ansehen und was wir als für dessen Herbeiführung wesentlich ansehen, hängt somit von unsrer Weltanschauung ab." Erst recht sind **alle Grundsätze der modernen historischen Methode nur verhüllte weltanschauliche Dogmen.** Denn nur moderne Skepsis proklamiert: Es gibt nichts Autoritatives und Absolutes in der Geschichte. Weiß man das von vornherein, so entdeckt man naturgemäß in aller und auch in der christlichen Historie nur Relatives und Vergängliches. Nicht minder ist es ein modernes Dogma, daß sich in der Vergangenheit alle Ereignisse in genauer Analogie zu den gegenwärtigen vollzogen haben müssen. Diese Meinung schließt eine ungeheure Selbstüberhebung des modernen Menschen in sich, ja sie steht in scharfem Widerspruch zu seinem sonst bekundetem Relativismus. Die Gegenwart soll also-

luter Bewertungsmaßstab für die Vergangenheit sein. Macht man mit dieser Behauptung wirklich ernst, so wird — noch abgesehen vom Christentum — ein gut Stück vergangener Historie fragwürdig. Denn nicht nur die primitiven Menschen, sondern auch andre große Kulturen verliefen nach ganz andern Gesetzen als die unsre. Darum erkennt auch hier ein nüchterner Historiker wie Bernheim an: „Daß die einzelnen Menschen und ganze Menschheitsgruppen sowohl in einer und derselben Zeit wie noch mehr zu verschiedenen Zeiten ihrem Empfinden, Vorstellen, Wollen nach vielfach anders sind und waren als wir." Das Dogma von der Analogie würde auch das andre moderne Dogma von der Entwicklung stürzen, das ja doch erst ganz allmählich sich die gegenwärtige Welt bilden läßt. Endlich würde es auch die Anerkennung großer Männer in der Geschichte unmöglich machen, deren Eigenart gerade in ihrer Einzigartigkeit und Unwiederholbarkeit besteht.

Aber auch das dritte Prinzip der modernen historischen Methode, daß alles geschichtliches Geschehen in einem gleichartigen Zusammenhang stehe, ist anfechtbar und nur die Forderung einer monistischen Weltanschauung. Mindestens ebenso möglich ist es, im Blick auf den wirklichen Geschichtsverlauf zu behaupten, daß es in ihm ein Sterben und radikale Neuanfänge gibt — wie Spengler das behauptet hat. Steht es aber so mit den Prinzipien der modernen historischen Methode, so ist es nicht nötig, die geschichtliche Betrachtung des Christentums unter sie zu beugen. Denn sie sind ohne deren Berücksichtigung zustande gekommen. Sieht man nämlich vom Christentum ab, so ist es in gewissem Sinn verständlich, wenn man nur Relatives und Analoges und einen einheitlichen Entwicklungszusammenhang in aller Geschichte sieht. **Die moderne historische Methode ist darum bestenfalls eine aus einseitiger Induktion unter Ignorierung des Christentums entworfene Geschichtsphilosophie.** Umgekehrt erwächst dem Historiker, der vom Christentum ausgeht, die Gewißheit, daß hier in der Geschichte eine Größe mit dem Anspruch auf einzigartigen Gehalt und Ursprung und darum auch auf absolute Geltung auftritt. Er wird gegen seine Anerkennung um so weniger Bedenken haben, als ihm in seinem gegenwärtigen religiösen Erleben gerade durch das Wort von dieser Geschichte entsprechende absolute und sein inneres Leben wandelnde Erfahrungen vermittelt wurden. So erklärt sich denn die christliche Anerkennung einer eigentümlichen Christentumsgeschichte aus der christlichen Weltanschauung und Religion des Betrachters, wie sich umgekehrt die Ablehnung durch moderne Historiker aus ihrer vom Christentum absehenden oder es geradezu ablehnenden Weltanschauung ergibt. **Der Gegensatz von Christentum und Geschichte ist darum nicht auf die Differenz zwischen einer zurückgebliebenen autoritativen**

Dogmatik und einer vorurteilslosen exakten geschichtlichen Methode zurückzuführen. Vielmehr ringen hier miteinander zwei Weltanschauungen in ihrer Anwendung auf die Geschichte.

VI.

Mit dieser prinzipiellen Erkenntnis und Anerkennung ist aber das letzte Ziel noch nicht erreicht, das auf ihre Ueberwindung hinausläuft. Ist gewiß das wichtigste Anliegen des Christen die Behauptung der Heilsgeschichte, so möchte er in seiner Weltanschauung doch auch die Tatbestände der ganzen Geschichte einbeziehen. In Wirklichkeit verbindet sich doch Welt- und Offenbarungsgeschichte. Im Alten Testament ist diese doch in die natürliche Volksgeschichte Israels eingebettet. Bedrängnisse des Volkes werden Anlaß messianischer Weissagungen, während umgekehrt prophetische Offenbarungen in das soziale Leben eingreifen. Auch im Neuen Testament bleiben solche Beziehungen. Lukas deutet sie an, wenn er die Geburt des Erlösers sich zu der Zeit vollziehen läßt, da Augustus Kaiser in Rom war, und Paulus bildet die grundsätzliche Formel, daß Christus in der Fülle der Zeit kam. Die natürliche geschichtliche Entwicklung ist nicht ohne Bedeutung für das Kommen Christi. Umgekehrt wirkt sehr bald das Christentum entscheidend in die Weltgeschichte hinein. **So verschlingen sich also tatsächlich die besondre Offenbarungsgeschichte und die Profangeschichte** und einen sich harmonisch, ohne ihre Unterschiede einzubüßen, wie das ein Höhenzug mit der Ebene tut. Eine gewisse Analogie zu diesem Tatbestand bildet das Verhältnis großer Männer zur Masse, trotz aller Unterschiedenheit stehen sie in Wechselwirkung. Massenbewegungen haben Luther vorbereitet, aber doch keineswegs seine einzigartige Persönlichkeit geschaffen, die dann ihrerseits in der vorbereiteten Zeit wirkliche Aufnahmen finden konnte. Genau so unterscheiden und verbinden sich Christentum und Weltgeschichte.

Fragt man, wie diese Harmonie möglich ist, so wird ein spekulativ denkender Christ eine ähnliche Antwort geben, wie wir die bei der Verbindung von Wunder und Naturgeschehen andeuteten (Märzheft 1929). Von Gott dem Schöpfer stammt die Weltgeschichte, von Gott dem Erlöser die Heilsgeschichte, von Gott dem Heiligen Geist ihre Erhaltung und Verinnerlichung bis zur Gegenwart. Aber dieser dreifache Gott ist doch der einige Gott und darum sind seine verschiedenen Werke aufeinander gestimmt. Gott hat die Weltgeschichte von vornherein so geordnet und geleitet, daß sie fähig war in der Fülle der Zeit die Heilsgeschichte aufzunehmen. Diese aber zielt wiederum darauf, der gesamten Geschichte reinigende und vollendende Antriebe zuzuführen. Darum wird sie auch zu einer innergeschichtlichen Triebkraft, wenn auch der Geist in ihr die übernatürlichen Kräfte und Triebe wachhält. **Von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit sind Chri-**

stentums- und Menschheitsgeschichte aufeinander gestimmt. Ihre Entgegensetzung erwächst nur aus einem falschen Dualismus, ihr Konflikt ist künstlich gemacht. In Wirklichkeit gehören Christentum und Geschichte zusammen.

VII.

Ist durch diese Ausführung die Möglichkeit einer Heilsgeschichte prinzipiell gerechtfertigt, so hat **historische Einzelarbeit** festzustellen, welche Bestandteile tatsächlich und religiös zur Heilsgeschichte gehören. Diese wird die Texte philologisch genau auslegen, auf ihre Herkunft untersuchen, mit andern Quellen vergleichen, Spannungen beobachten, sie stehen lassen oder ausgleichen, um so allmählich das wirkliche Geschehen vom chronologischen Verlauf bis zum Verständnis der heiligen Persönlichkeiten darzustellen. Je unvoreingenommener im einzelnen die Arbeit verläuft, um so weniger werden ihre Ergebnisse die offenbarungsgeschichtliche Grundlage des Christentums gefährden, sondern vielmehr ihren granitenen Grund immer schärfer herausarbeiten. Daß zeigt die Geschichte der modernen historischen Kritik an der Bibel aufs Deutlichste. Wenn im 19. Jahrhundert die sogenannte Tübinger Schule zu so radikalen Resultaten kam durch F. C. Baur und besonders Strauß, so lag das deutlich nicht an der exakten historischen Arbeit, sondern an ihren dem Christentum widersprechenden philosophischen Prinzipien, die von diesen Männern auch deutlich ausgesprochen wurden. A. Ritschl löste sich von dieser Philosophie und infolgedessen wurden seine historischen Resultate weit konservativer. Auch Harnacks neutestamentliche Kritik ist immer rückläufiger geworden und Th. Zahns Resultate verdanken ihren positiven Gehalt ihrer philosophiefreien Exaktheit. **Infolgedessen kommt es nicht nur prinzipiell, sondern auch faktisch zu einer Harmonie zwischen Christentum und Geschichte, sobald man auf „die moderne historische Methode" verzichtet.**

Eine Charakteristik der reformieten Kirche im Vergleich mit der lutherischen im Blick auf die geplante Vereinigung unsrer Synode mit der „Reformierten Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten."

Von E. G. Aldinger.

Es ist naheliegend, daß man in den Kreisen unsrer Synode, jetzt da ihre Vereinigung mit der reformierten Kirche geplant wird, sich mit erneuten Interesse der Geschichte und dem Wesen dieser Kirche zuwendet. Allerdings sollte das mehr zum Zweck der Auffrischung und Mehrung unsrer Kenntnis in Bezug auf die reformierte Kirche geschehen, als etwa im Gedanken aus diesem Studium das Für und Wider dieser Vereinigung abzuleiten. Das Für ist von unserm Standpunkt der evangelischen Union aus auf Grund von dem: „Auf daß sie alle eins seien" unsers Herrn Jesus längst entschieden. Ja diese Vereinigung hat unser Bekenntnisparagraph prinzipiell schon bei der Gründung unsrer Synode vollzogen. Seitdem ist unsre Synode mit ausgestreckter Hand dagestanden und hat nur auf den Handschlag der andern gewartet — bisher freilich vergeblich.

Wir machen nun einen neuen Appell. Bei unsern lutherischen Brüdern ist er, wie zu erwarten, verlorene Liebesmühe, aber von reformierter Seite kommt uns nun, wie wir hören, Geneigtheit entgegen. Da kommt es nun freilich darauf an, wie von reformierter Seite unsre Vereinigung gedacht wird. Wird etwa ein Anschluß von uns verlangt, so daß unsre Synode in der reformierten Kirche aufgeht, so kann es, nicht etwa vom Standpunkt der mehr lutherisch Gesinnten unter uns, sondern von unserm evangelischen Standpunkt aus, nur eine Antwort geben: Reformiert werden wir nicht, so wenig als lutherisch oder wesleyanisch; nicht als ob wir gegen die reformierte, die lutherische, die wesleyanische Besonderheit etwas hätten, wir haben nur etwas gegen ein kirchliches Betonen dieser Besonderheit, weil es ein Zertrennen des Leibes Christi bedeutet. Ein Aufgeben unsrer Synode in der reformierten Kirche wäre ein Aufgeben einer großen, schönen, uns von Gott gegebenen Aufgabe, eben der Union.

Ist aber ein Zusammenschluß gemeint, so daß man das Getrenntmarschieren aufgibt, miteinander marschiert und miteinander schlägt im Namen Jesu Christi, etwa unter einem gemeinsamen, die Vereinigung bezeugenden Namen, so ist nicht einzusehen, wie von unserm evangelischen Standpunkt aus irgend jemand etwas dagegen haben kann.

Soll nun eine kurze Uebersicht der Geschichte der reformierten Kirche, ihrer Art und ihrem Wesen nach, gegeben werden, so kann dies wohl kaum geschehen, ohne von vornherein das Wesentlichste

aus der lutherischen Kirche miteinzubeziehen, und in Ansehung der in unserm Bekenntnisparagraphen vorausgesetzten Uebereinstimmung und Verschiedenheit der Lehre dieser beiden Kirchen auf die letzten Gründe zurückzugehen.

Man wird wohl sagen dürfen, daß die Geschichte dieser beiden Kirchen als solcher mit dem Marburger Gespräch beginnt. Viel menschliche Schwäche, politische Pläne, Rechthaberei, gelehrter Ehrgeiz, Herrschsucht haben dazu und dabei schließlich zum unheilvollen Bruch geführt, und doch war das Zutagetreten der beiden grundverschiedenen Richtungen eine psychologische Notwendigkeit, wobei nur zu beklagen ist, daß die Zeit und ihre religiöse Erkenntnis noch nicht reif genug war, um diese Richtungen in christlicher, ich möchte sagen, in paulinischer Duldung zu umspannen, und jede in ihrem Teil sich zum Segen der Kirche auswirken zu lassen. Man kann sich beim Studium jener Verhandlungen, soviel davon kund geworden ist, des Eindrucks nicht erwehren, daß da auf beiden Seiten eine Unreife zu Tage tritt, die nur durch die Hitze der Rechthaberei zu erklären ist.

Ich weiß im Augenblick nicht wer einmal gesagt hat: Zwei Seelen sind in meiner Brust. Sollten einmal die lutherische und die reformierte Kirche eins werden, so werden dadurch auch zwei Seelen in einer Brust zu wohnen kommen, die zwei Seelen, die überhaupt in der ganzen Menschheit überall und zu jeder Zeit vorhanden waren und sind. Wenn ich recht dran bin, war es Tertullian der gesagt hat „Anima christiana" und ich möchte hinzusetzen, und als solche ist sie entweder lutherisch oder reformiert. Der Unterschied dieser beiden Kirchen ist im letzten Grund eine Naturanlage. Und es ist ganz merkwürdig, wie diese beiden Seelen in Marburg in den beiden Hauptpersonen, Luther und Zwingli, so recht eigentlich verkörpert sind. Es war wirklich ein großes Wort, das Luther als die Quintessenz der ganzen Verhandlungen gelassen oder vielmehr ungelassen ausgesprochen hat: „Ihr habt einen andern Geist als wir." Mit seinem Sinn spürte er auf der andern Seite einen andern Geist. Die Gegenseite spürte aber auch einen andern Geist bei ihren Gegnern. Luther hätte vielleicht noch nicht einmal angeben können, worin eigentlich dieser andre Geist bestand. Man hat ihn seitdem bald in diesem, bald in jenem gesucht. Ich finde den andern Geist, der eben den Unterschied der beiden hier zutage getretenen Richtungen ausmacht, darin, daß auf der einen Seite eine mehr zur Mystik neigende, auf der andern eine mehr verstandesmäßige Geistesveranlagung vorliegt. Zwar ist auch Zwingli ein Mystiker. Er ist ein lebendiger Christ, alle seine Auslassungen atmen ein volles Gottvertrauen, ein sicheres Gegründetsein auf Christum, das sich allerdings nicht in der geistvollen, kindlich an

sprechenden Weise auszusprechen versteht, wie bei Luther. Aber in seinem innersten Glaubensleben unterscheidet er sich kaum von Luther, wie er auch für seinen Glauben nach seiner Ueberzeugung sein Leben gelassen hat. Lebendiger Glaube ist aber nicht denkbar ohne Mystik.

Es ist aber charakteristisch, daß bei den Verhandlungen zu Marburg bei Zwingli immer wieder die Worte vernünftig und unvernünftig vorkommen. Gott könne nichts von uns verlangen, was wieder die Vernunft streite, was Luther zu der Entgegnung reizt, er würde Holzäpfel oder Mist essen, wenn es Gott verlange, was Zwingli wieder bäurisch findet.

Luthers Geist ist auch der Verstandesschärfe nach zwischen diesen beiden der überragendere, aber die tieferen Geheimnisse des Glaubens haben es ihm angetan. Er faßt mehr noch mit dem Gemüt als mit dem Verstand. Dabei ist Luther, was man nie außer acht lassen sollte, Aesthetiker, bei dem das Gefühl fürs Schöne maßgebend ist. Er ist eine durch und durch dichterische Natur, Zwingli durch und durch prosaisch, trotz der Lieder, die er gemacht hat.

Mit diesen zwei Seelen ist auch gleich die ganze weitere Fortentwicklung, die ganze Geschichte der beiden Kirchen gegeben.

Es ist merkwürdig, daß Kalvin, der doch wieder ein ganz andrer ist als Zwingli, doch von vornherein mit diesem und nicht mit den Wittenbergern sympathisiert — doch eine verwandte Seele.

Es handelt sich hier im Grund um einen Unterschied der Nationalität und des Volkscharakters. Das sehen wir auch in den Wegen, auf denen sich die beiden Kirchen auf der Länder- und Völkerkarte ausbreiten. Während die lutherische Kirche mehr den langsamen, schwerblütigen germanischen Stämmen und ihrer Art nachgehend sich nach Norden bis nach Skandinavien, durch Polen zu den Balten hin ausbreitet, geht die reformierte von der Schweiz hinüber nach Frankreich, in kleineren Ablegern nach Italien, Spanien, in größeren den Rhein hinauf nach der Pfalz, durch die Niederlande hinüber nach Britannien, ostwärts zu den Ungarn, kurz gerade den Völkern nach, deren ganze Geschichte einen mehr raschblütigen, mehr ins Aeußere als in die Tiefe gehenden Volkscharakter anzeigt. Im Herzen Deutschlands im Brandenburgischen bildet nur das preußische Fürstenhaus eine künstliche einsame Insel.

Die Verschiedenheit der inneren Geistesrichtung zeigt sich auch in der inneren Entwicklung der beiden Kirchen. Der Verstand strebt rücksichtslos vorwärts, das Gemüt will halten und schonen. Darum ist die reformierte Kirche mehr radikal, ganz dem Charakter Zwinglis gemäß. Da wird gleich gründlich aufgeräumt bis man das Kind mit dem Bad ausschüttet. Weil in der katholischen Kirche so viel

Mißbrauch getrieben wird, ist alles, was von ihr kommt sündhaft. Zwinglis und seiner Nachfolger Axt macht die reformierten Kirchen schmucklos und kahl, so auch den Gottesdienst; Altäre und Bilder zerstört, die Orgeln selbst entfernt, Musik, nach den Gesetzen der Harmonielehre komponierte Melodien sind schon zu weltlich für den Dienst im Hause Gottes, ja es scheint in der ersten Zeit wenigstens zu weltlich zu sein, beim Gottesdienst in selbstverfaßten Liedern Gott zu preisen und anzubeten. Echt reformiert ist es nur Psalmen nach einer Art melodiöser Schablone zu singen, lange Zeit schweigt jede Lithurgie, nur Gebet wird noch laut. Es scheint jeder Kunst- und Schönheitsinn abhanden gekommen zu sein. Die reine Verstandesschärfe und -härte führt zu einer Ethik, die mehr auf alttestamentlichen als auf neutestamentlichen Anschauungen steht. Sie ist vielfach ein Stehen unter dem Gesetz bis zu rigoristischer Strenge.

Verstandesmäßige, mehr aufs Aeußere gerichtete Charaktere sind aber meist besonders tatkräftig. Darum ist die reformierte Kirche ihrer ganzen Geschichte gemäß eine Martha. Sie ist von den Schwesterkirchen die praktisch tätigere, der mehr beschaulichen Maria gegenüber, die sich oft damit begnügt und aufhält, die reine Lehre immer noch ein wenig reiner zu machen, bis sie schließlich Angst vor einer werktätigen Liebe bekommt, und gute Werke für schädlich erklärt. Dr. Kamphausen in seinem: „Will it be Luther or Kalvin?“ führt das rege kirchliche Leben, wie es sich in allen Kirchen des reformierten Bekenntnisses, wie es sich besonders hier in Amerika hervortue, auf Kalvin zurück, auf seine Betonung des Lebens mehr denn der Lehre, der Werke mehr denn des Glaubens, der Freiheit der Kirche vom Staat, des Einflusses der Kirche auf das öffentliche Leben. Man findet in den reformierten Kirchen ganz entschieden zu allen Zeiten mehr praktisches Christentum als bei den Lutherischen. Die reformierte Kirche ist es aber auch von Anfang an, die bereit ist, mit dem Schwert dreinzuschlagen. Es ist ganz charakteristisch, daß in der Schlacht bei Kappeln am 11. Oktober 1531, Zwingli mit der Hellebarde in der Hand teilnimmt, wozu er nicht gezwungen war, und fällt in einem Kriegszug, der offenbar verloren ging, weil man ihn nicht, wie Zwingli wollte, schon zwei Jahre früher unternommen hatte. Das Schlachtschwert ist von da an der reformierten Kirche nichts Ungewohntes geblieben, die Hugenottenkriege, die Kamisardenaufstände sind reformierte Kriegstaten. Wie sehr sticht dagegen der Schmalkaldische Krieg ab, bei dem die lutherischen Fürsten bis es zu spät war, unschlüssig waren, ob es recht sei, in Sachen der Religion zum Schwert zu greifen, wie auch Luther zeitlebens der Meinung blieb, daß in Religionssachen nur das Schwert des Geistes geführt werden dürfe.

Ihrem ganzen Charakter nach ist darum die reformierte Kirche

die eigentliche Märtyrerkirche. In der Bartholomäusnacht ist reformiertes Blut in Strömen geflossen. Frankreich, Italien, Spanien, die Pfalz, die Niederlande, England haben Reformierte ihren Glauben mit ihrem Blut besiegeln sehen.

Ist die reformierte Kirche der Martha zu vergleichen, so mit Fug und Recht die lutherische mehr der beschaulichen Maria. Luthers Charakter und Art nach ist sie durchaus konservativ. Radikalismus steht ihr fern. Luthers ästhetischer Sinn hat ihn und die von ihm gegründete und geleitete Kirche in wesentlich andre Bahnen gewiesen. Was die katholische Kirche Schönes geschaffen, wird beibehalten, nur die Mißbräuche werden abgetan, die Orgeln bleiben, die Bilder bleiben, die Kunst bleibt im Dienst der Kirche, das Kirchenlied lebt erst neu auf.

Ganz der fundamentalen inneren Einstellung der beiden Kirchen entspricht auch ihre beiderseitige Lehre. Unser Bekenntnisparagraph redet von Punkten, in denen sie übereinstimmen und von solchen, in denen sie auseindergehen. In Wirklichkeit muß man aber zugeben, daß sie wohl in keinem Punkt wirklich übereinstimmen, so wenig zwei Tautropfen denselben Lichtstrahl in derselben Weise brechen, und doch ist es das gleiche Gotteslicht, daß sich in ihnen bricht, und in beiden ist es eine gottgeschaffene Anlage, welche die verschiedene Brechung wirkt.

Wir können hier in Kürze die durchgehende Verschiedenheit der Anschauungen, wie sie nicht bloß in diesen beiden Kirchen sich darstellen, sondern, ich darf wohl sagen, wo nur Bibelgläubige sind, mehr oder weniger existieren, an den Lehrsätzen der Lutherischen und Reformierten Kirche Punkt für Punkt verfolgen. In zwei Sachen stimmen sie restlos überein: Im Stehen auf der Schrift allein als der alleinigen und ausreichenden Quelle für Lehre und Leben, und der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben allein, also in den Hauptpunkten, in den übrigen Punkten werden wir immer lutherischerseits ein Festhalten an einem tieferen Mysterium, reformierterseits das Streben nach einem mehr verstandesmäßigen Erkennen feststellen können.

Den Anfang aller Verschiedenheit der beiden Kirchen finden wir wohl in dem: „Finitum non est capax infiniti" der Reformierten und dem: „Finitum capax infiniti" der Lutheraner.

Dieser Unterschied tritt uns zuerst in der Lehre vom heiligem Abendmahl entgegen, wie ja auch Zwingli zuerst sein „Finitum non est capax infiniti" im Abendmahlsstreit mit Luther vorgebracht hat. Ist „finitum non capax infiniti," so ist eine Gegenwart des Leibes Christi in Brot und Wein ausgeschlossen.

Ebenso zeigt sich in der Lehre von der Taufe ein durchgreifender Unterschied. Wenn im Heidelberger Katechismus Frage 69

lautet: „Wie wirst du in der heiligen Taufe erinnert und versichert, daß das einige Opfer Christi am Kreuz dir zu gut komme?“ So klingt schon aus dieser Frage allein, aus dem **erinnert** und **versichert** eine ganz andre Anschauung heraus als wenn Luther in seinem großen Katechismus erklärt, er würde einem heuchlerischen taufen, wie einen Gläubigen, und würde sagen, daß es eine rechte und wahre Taufe sei („Katech. major P. 545, 54). Und wenn es im Heidelberger Katechismus in Betreff der Kindertaufe heißt: „Ja, dieweil sie sowohl als die Alten in den Bund Gottes und seine Gemeinde gehören usw., sollen sie auch durch die Taufe, als des Bundes Zeichen, der christlichen Kirche einverleibt und von der Ungläubigen Kindern geschieden werden,“ so ist das doch etwas anders als wenn es in der „Konfessio Augustana“ über die Kindertaufe heißt: „Auch daß die Kinder getauft werden sollen, welche durch die Taufe Gott **dargebracht** in die **Gnade Gottes aufgenommen werden**“ — also dort das **Zeichen** der Aufnahme in die **Kirche**, hier das **Mittel** der Aufnahme in die **Gnade Gottes**, dort ein Entkleiden von aller mystischen Wirkung hier ein Behaupten einer solchen.

Wenn es dann aber nachher in der Augustana heißt: „Damnantqui affirmant pueros sine Baptismo salvos fieri,“ so wird jeder, der nicht gerade ein Lutheraner ist, froh sein, daß er es nicht ist.

Am stärksten unterscheidet sich die Reformierte Kirche von der Lutherischen in der Lehre von der Gnade, wie sie sich besonders in der kalvinistischen Prädestinationslehre darstellt. „Finitum non est capax infiniti,“ aber das „infinitum“ bestimmt das „finitum“ absolut, so auch den endlichen Menschen, so zur Seligkeit, so zur Verdammnis. Da ist die Subjektivität des Menschen gänzlich aufgehoben. Die lutherische Lehre lehrt ja auch eine Prädestination besonders auch in der Lehre „de servo arbitrio,“ sie lehrt aber doch und zwar inkonsequenterweise wenigstens die Widerstandsfähigkeit des Menschen und wahrt damit die Subjektivität, sowie etwas von ihrem „finitum capax infiniti“ auch in dieser Lehre und damit auch das Mysterium, das in dem Ineinanderwirken von oben her und von unten herauf tätig ist.

Wir könnten diesen prinzipiellen Unterschied in allen Punkten feststellen, in der Lehre von der Person Christi im Nebeneinander der Naturen, wobei die menschliche gegenüber der göttlichen fast zurücktritt auf Seite der reformierten Kirche, und in der lutherischen „Communicatio idiomatum“ bis zur „ubiquitas corporis Christi.“

Eine ganz oberflächliche Logik hat aus diesen Verschiedenheiten Verdammungsurteile gefolgert: **Eine** Lehre kann nur die Wahr-

heit sein, so muß die eine oder die andre Auffassung falsch — Lüge sein.

Ich glaube, es ist Winston Churchill, der in seinem Roman „The Crisis" von jemand sagt, er habe die seltene Gabe besessen, die zwei Seiten einer Sache zu sehen, zu verstehen, und zu würdigen. Das ist allerdings eine seltene Gabe und ihr Fehlen hat im bürgerlichen, staatlichen und kirchlichen Leben noch jederzeit viel Unheil angerichtet. Die reformierte und die lutherische Auffassung stellt Punkt für Punkt die zwei Seiten der betreffenden Wahrheiten dar, wie sie sich der geistigen Veranlagung des einzelnen Individuums darstellen.

Jede dieser Veranlagungen hat ihre Vorzüge und ihre Gefahren. Die mehr verstandesmäßige hat den Vorzug größerer logischer Schärfe und Konsequenz, die man unstreitig der reformierten Lehre nicht absprechen kann. Aber sie steht auch in Gefahr rationalistischer Verflachung, die doch auch in den Lehrschriften der Reformierten immer wieder zutage tritt. Die mehr gemütvolle, zur Mystik neigende Veranlagung hat den Vorzug in allem mehr in die Tiefe zu gehen, was ja die lutherische Lehre jederzeit tut, sie steht aber auch in Gefahr ins Wort hineinzugeheimnissen, was nicht drin steht, unterzulegen statt auszulegen bis aus der Mystik ein Mystizismus wird, wie wir an der Lehre von der „ubiquitas corporis Christi" sehen. Darum sind die beiden Richtungen da, um einander zu ergänzen. Was wäre aus der Protestantischen Kirche geworden, wenn es nur Lutheraner gäbe? Vielleicht wäre sie noch mit der Zeit auf die Notwendigkeit der apostolischen Sukzession verfallen, freilich auf anderm Weg wie die Anglikaner, um die mystische Kette fest zu schließen. Was wäre sie geworden, wenn es nur Reformierte gäbe? Vielleicht schon lange das, was sich gerade in der neuesten Zeit auch bei uns rasch auszubilden scheint, ein äußerliches Werkwesen, ohne inneren tieferen Glaubensgehalt.

Darum sind diese beiden Richtungen notwendig, um sich gegenseitig zu ergänzen. Daß sie aber so lange schon feindlich sich bekämpft haben, das hat der Feind getan. „Es dauert länger schon als recht." Es ist Zeit, daß der Sache einmal ein Ende gemacht wird, wie ja die Unierte Kirche schon seit mehr als hundert Jahren darauf hinarbeitet. Tun wir, was wir können.

Daß eine Vereinigung möglich ist, hat ja schon der Schluß des Marburger Gesprächs gezeigt, wobei man sich trotz der großen grundsätzlichen Gegensätze auf fünfzehn Artikel einigte, in denen man übereinstimme, und an die man wohl auch bei der Abfassung unsers Bekenntnisparagraphen gedacht hat bei den Worten: „Insofern dieselben übereinstimmen."

Diese fünfzehn Artikel sind:

Von der heiligen Dreifachigkeit, der Person Christi, der Erbsünde, und der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben, dem äußerlichen Wort, der Taufe, den guten Werken, der Beichte, der Obrigkeit, den Traditionen, der Kindertaufe, dem Sakrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi.

Herz was willst du mehr! Darauf hätte man füglich einig werden können. Darauf könnte man sich heute noch einigen.

Falls nun die Vereinigung zu Stande käme, welchen Vorteil hätten wir für beide Teile zu erwarten? — Ist die Vereinigung recht und gottgefällig — und daran haben wir ja gar keinen Zweifel, so ist die Frage nach dem Vorteil eigentlich hinfällig. Sie hätte zu geschehen: „For better or for worse."

Doch kann man sicherlich auf die Frage nach dem Vorteil mit Römer 4, 2 antworten: „Zwar fast viel." Ich meine unser Exekutivsekretär, Bruder H. L. Streich hat in der Julinummer des theologischen Magazin 1928 die Vorteile in richtiger Weise dargestellt, so daß man nichts zuzufügen braucht.

Uebrigens ist „The Reformed Church in the United Staates," um die es sich bei unsern jetzigen Bestrebungen handelt, ein sehr respektabler Kirchenkörper. Der Anfang ihrer Organisation in diesem Land ist in das Jahr 1740 zu setzen, in welchem Jahr sich in Pennsylvania 24 organisierte Gemeinden zusammenschlossen, nachdem schon seit 1725 durch Einwanderung aus Deutschland und der Schweiz, aus Holland, auch aus Frankreich, in Virginia, Georgia, den Carolinas, New York, Pennsylvania und Maryland reformierte Gemeinden bestanden hatten und zum Teil auch wieder eingegangen waren. Im Jahre 1747 fand unter Pastor Michael Schlatter eine weitere Organisation statt. Von da an war diese Kirche unter dem Namen: Deutsche Reformierte Kirche bekannt und stand unter der Oberleitung der holländischen reformierten Kirche. Im Jahre 1793 erklärte sie sich jedoch mit 22 Pastoren, 78 Gemeinden, und 15,000 Kommunikanten unabhängig von Holland und nahm den Namen „The Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States" an. Im Jahre 1869 wurde dieser Name in „The Reformed Church in the United States" umgewandelt. Sie unterscheidet sich mit diesem Namen auch von der ursprünglichen holländischen reformierten Kirche, die gegenwärtig den Namen „The Reformed Church in America" führt, und 120,000 Glieder zählt.

Die deutsche reformierte Synode führte in der ersten Zeit ihres Bestehens eine ziemlich kümmerliche Existenz. Sie besaß Jahrzehnte lang kein eigenes College, kein theologisches Seminar, kein Kirchenblatt, keine Lithurgie, kein eignes Gesangbuch, keine Sonntagschule. Im Jahre 1819 wurde die Synode in „Klassen" eingeteilt, im Jahre 1824 wurde die Ohio-Synode organisiert. Das erste theo-

logische Seminar wurde im Jahre 1825 eröffnet, im Jahre 1836 ein „Marschall-College," im Jahre 1827 wurde ein „Magazine of the Reformed Church" herausgegeben, im Jahre 1863 die Generalsynode organisiert.

Heute besteht diese Kirche aus 1349 Pastoren, 1735 Gemeinden, 349,711 konfirmierten, 138,367 unkonfirmierten Gliedern, im Ganzen 488,078; sie verfügt über fünf Colleges, zwei für Frauen, drei theologische Seminare. Ferner unterhält sie ein theologisches Seminar und ein College für Frauen in Japan, ein College für Knaben und zwei Mädchenschulen in China, eine Knabenschule in Bagdad, Mesopotamien. Außerdem unterhält sie fünf Waisenhäuser, zwei Altenheime. Ihre Gemeinden bringen $5,177,000 für ihren eigenen Haushalt auf, $1,629,000 für synodale Zwecke, Mission und Wohltätigkeit.

Was unser Synodalhaus ist, ist dort das „Schaff Building" in Philadelphia, dreizehn Stockwerke hoch.

Bekannt ist wohl allen das „Central Publishing House" in Cleveland, Ohio. Von diesem werden drei wöchentliche Blätter herausgegeben: „The Messenger" im Osten, „The Christian World" im Westen und die „Kirchenzeitung." Die Organisation besteht in erstens der Generalsynode, welche sich alle drei Jahre versammelt, zweitens sieben Distriktssynoden, die sich alle Jahre, und drittens sechzig Klassen, die sich jährlich oder halbjährlich versammeln.

Die Lehre der Kirche gründet sich auf den Heidelberger Katechismus, der in ihr eine viel bedeutendere Rolle zu spielen scheint als bei uns unser evangelischer Katechismus. Sie scheint es, nebenbei gesagt, besser zu verstehen für sich Propaganda zu machen als wir, indem man den kleinen Traktat „The Reformed Church" für einen Cent das Stück haben kann.

Durch Vereinigung mit dieser Kirche kämen wir wohl auch in nähere Beziehung, vielleicht zur späteren Vereinigung mit den übrigen Kirchen dieses Landes reformierter Richtung mit einer Gliederzahl von mehreren Millionen, was für ein unionistisch gesinntes Herz gewiß viel Verlockendes hätte.

Allerdings wird es von der geplanten Vereinigung unsrer evangelischen Synode mit der reformierten Kirche heißen müssen: „Gut Ding will Weile haben," besonders da auf beiden Seiten Vorurteile zu überwinden sind.

Es fällt mir da ein kleines Erlebnis ein. Da kam einmal ein Bäuerlein zu mir und brachte mir Krummachers Predigten. Er warf sie weit weg. Er habe ausgefunden, sie seien reformiert. Dabei hielt sich der gute Mann zu den Methodisten, weil er dort mehr Leben zu spüren meinte als bei uns, aber reformiert schien ihm der Inbegriff alles Verwerflichen zu sein. So mag es noch

manche in unsrer Synode geben. Und auf reformierter Seite mag es noch mehr Schwierigkeiten geben, indem dort der Unionsgedanke nicht heimisch ist. In dem Traktat „The Reformed Church" wird besonders auf den irenischen Charakter der reformierten Kirche hingewiesen, was gewiß gerechtfertigt ist. Zwar unter sich waren die Reformierten nicht viel weniger unverträglich als die Lutheraner. Die Helvetica eins und zwei und besonders die Dortrechtana sind Marksteine heftiger Kämpfe, die Letztere besonders in Sachen der Prädestinationslehre gegen die Arminianer, Kämpfe denen sogar das edle Haupt Johann Oldenbarnevelts auf dem Blutgerüst zum Opfer fiel, trotz der fast fußfälligen Fürbitte der edlen Luise von Coligny vor dem Prinzen Moritz von Oranien.

Aber gegen die Lutheraner haben sich die Reformierten immer anständiger benommen, als diese gegen sie, haben sogar das Werk Luthers und Melanchtons als großer Reformatoren, wie der Traktat betont dankbar anerkannt, was meines Wissens noch kein waschechter Lutheraner Zwingli und Kalvin gegenüber fertiggebracht hat. So mag bei den Reformierten auch der Gedanke an eine Vereinigung mit unsrer Synode bei Pastoren und Laien auf weniger Wiederstand stoßen als wir vielleicht meinen.

Rudolf Sohm, der obgleich Jurist, in seinem kleinen „Grundriß der Kirchengeschichte" vielleicht das feinste derartige Werk geschaffen hat, schreibt: „So verderblich der Kampf der beiden protestantischen Bekenntnisse miteinander, so segensreich ist die Wechselwirkung gewesen, welche sie durch Mitteilung ihrer Gaben geübt haben." So wäre doch zu hoffen, daß eine Union zwischen unsrer Synode und der „Reformed Church" auch mit dazu beitragen könnte, daß die tätige Martha die beschauliche Maria zu regerem Wirken, die Maria die Martha mehr zu dem einem, das not ist, führen möge.

EDITORIALS

IS IT A DISGRACE TO BE CLASSED AS AN "ORTHODOX" MINISTER?

It would be no wonder if the question at the head of this article impressed a good many of our readers as being a little silly. How could it be a disgrace to be orthodox, especially in the Evangelical Synod? Our church has never been as straight-laced in its theology as most of the Lutheran bodies. It has always distinguished between essentials and non-essentials, but it has also always adhered to what it considered vital elements of the Christian faith. Still, there is not a doubt that we are living in a transition period. We have left the isolated position of our fathers and taken a definite place in American Protestantism. As a consequence the thought-movements of the time affect us as well as they do other church bodies. It would not be surprising, no, it is even to be expected that some of us, individually, might go to greater lengths in shedding the past than the members of other churches, who have already had time to find their bearings again.

We are all, more or less, buyers in the theological market; or if we don't buy the books we certainly read them. The theological output, however, is almost exclusively of the liberal, advanced, critical type. Books of a more conservative tendency—not to say, entirely orthodox—are as rare as white ravens. In this country, particularly, the writers of theological books are under the spell of Science. Science is the modern Diana, "whom all America and the world worshippeth" (Acts 19, 27). The theologians, just now, are sitting at her feet humbly, to be taught new conceptions of God. They used to go to school to the prophets and to Jesus for that purpose. But remember, Jesus had no telescope nor microscope. He was doubtless a most wonderful man, but he lived in the first century, not the twentieth. His authority is not final any more. It has passed over to Science and the scientific method. The scientists have so far not succeeded in giving the world a satisfactory idea of God. According to professor Barnes, we even have to give up the hope of ever getting one that is in harmony with science and, at the same time, adequate to serve as the core of that new religion the people are looking for (see his art. in "Current History," March, 1929). Nevertheless, Shailer Mathews, in his "Contribution of Science to Religion" (see Book Review), tries to settle the question whether in this age of science we can keep our

faith in God and self-respect (!). It certainly has gone far if we have to ask the scientists for permission to retain our religious faith.

The churches still persist in professing that the Bible is their infallible guide in faith and life (see also the proposed "Basis of Union" on that point). Yet one wonders with how many mental reservations that confession is subscribed to by the up-to-date individual minister. How much confusion must necessarily arise if the writers of the day imbue their readers with the idea as though Science was to settle their faith in God; as though the conceptions of God had to be determined by Science; as though we had to revise our faith in God every time a new scientific star appears on the firmament. The reality of God and his interest in man can only be taken hold of by the spiritual experience of faith. Christian faith can never do without, or go beyond the scriptures, out of which it originated. Nor can it have a healthy growth unless shared with fellow-believers. These three factors are the indispensable elements of the Christian God-consciousness. Doubtless the workings of God in the world of nature and man may be better understood by the aid of the sciences, but science itself never finds him unless guided by the hand of faith.

We say now that to believe in these three fundamental elements of the Christian life, personal experience, the word of God and the testimony of the church, constitutes the right kind of orthodoxy. We are well aware that different opinions are held by different people on these three factors, especially on the second and third. Still, if the authority of the scriptures is abandoned, or if in a church all kinds of opinions, if only honestly held, are equally justified, chaos must be the result. In upholding the need of this kind of orthodoxy we by no means side with the Fundamentalists, in the ordinary sense of this term. To say, with them, that the Bible is inspired from Genesis to Revelation, without any qualifications, is a view we learned to give up 40 years ago. Nor do we object to restatements of creeds, although, so far, we haven't seen any that was acceptable to us. Not many blocks from here there is a Baptist Church, whose creed is put on the Bulletin Board. It reads: "We believe in the whole Bible, the saving blood, and the return of Jesus." That is a short creed but not an improvement on the old one, nor a good one for this present age.

Modern writers seem to think that if they only get a satisfactory statement of the God-idea, all their work is done. By no means: Salvation in Christ for individual and society, is the great Christian thesis. It provokes us to witness this idolatry of science practised by theologians; to see them cooling their heels in the ante chambers of some biologist or chemist or psychologist, with the hope of picking up some crumbs that have fallen from the table of the great

authority. Let us despise this servile attitude; let us be spiritual men, wedded to the scriptures; prove all teachings that are worth looking into and be supremely confident our Christian faith will be able to ride the waves securely no matter how high they go.

ON SECOND THOUGHT

It is always precarious to write an editorial three or four months before it is going to be read, for how many things may happen that will make your editorial either stale or premature. For instance, under the influence of an enthusiastic luncheon meeting, we wrote last January that the merger was coming, and we gave it our blessing by saying that we had studied the "Basis of Union" and not found a germ of Modernism in it. In the meantime others have looked into this Basis of Union and seem to have found a good deal more than we suspected. One of our professors is not satisfied with the form in which the first article of the faith has been stated. God's creative power and his personality, he says, are not definitely enough emphasized. He also misses the strong accent on human sin, the uncompromising dualism that runs through all scripture. And most decidedly does he object to the way the social gospel has found expression. According to him "the divine plan for mankind does not include a social order in harmony with the ideals and spirit of Jesus Christ," for that would ultimately involve the elimination of sin and selfishness, which is not to be expected in this present aeon. Another professor is in full agreement with the first one in his interpretation of the "Kingdom of God." It is transcendent in nature; the first Christians always understood by it "the *final* revelation of the power and glory of God."

There is at hand also a discussion of the merger plan and, more particularly, of its doctrinal statement on the Basis of Union, by Rev. Heyl, the editor of the "Reformierte Kirchenzeitung" (Cleveland), the church paper for the German pastors of the Reformed Church. Rev. Heyl is in favor of the merger but he is not satisfied with the formulation of the doctrinal position (in the "Basis"). He misses in it a clear expression of the fundamentals of the faith and wants it to be brought in closer touch with the teachings of the Reformers. He says he is not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but he is sure that the three Churches will not accept the proposed formulation of faith, for although there are modernists in all three denominations the great majority of their members stand by the old essentials.*

*The objection of some Reformed pastors to the "Stationing Committee" and to the curtailing of the congregations' right to choose their ministers we will not discuss here.

Now then, after hearing this comment from various sources, must we—i. e. the editor—"on second thought," make the confession that we were mistaken as to the orthodoxy of the theology in the Basis of Union? We think not. There is in it the Eternal Father of whom are all things (no danger of pantheism here); the Eternal Son, "conceived," etc., his atoning cross and his resurrection; the Eternal Spirit, who renews and sanctifies the heart and enables us to proclaim the gospel of forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God through Christ above. There is in it a special paragraph on the social gospel saying that the triumph of the Kingdom of God *would mean* a world of righteousness and brotherhood, and that it is the duty of the church to demand that justice and love should have full expression in all human relationships. We know very well the difference in the views of Germans and Americans on the Kingdom of God. Neither the one side nor the other though reckons with the possibility of barring sin from this world. The Kingdom of God in its full sense is an ideal and we never reach it wholly. Christ himself says: "Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect." We never achieve this ideal; still he holds it before us. The Germans tell us we are shut up in a sinful world, God alone can bring about a real change. The Americans say, yes, but we can make the world better, as God's instruments. Should it not be possible to strike a proper balance between American optimism and activism and German pessimism and inwardness?

So, after all is said, we still believe we had reason for our favorable verdict. At the same time, we knew just as well that the language in the Basis of Union was different from what we were accustomed to use and hear. We notice that some of the districts that have met and discussed the merger plan thus far (May 16), have indeed been impressed with the criticism that has found expression. They are in favor of the union but they leave it to the General Conference or, better, the "General Council" of the three Communions to frame a satisfactory statement of faith. It seems likely that a great majority of the districts, if not all, will follow the same course, that, therefore, our General Conference, in the fall, will overwhelmingly ratify the plan of union. What the Reformed Church and the United Brethren will do will be known by the time this number appears. On the action of these bodies—which will take place a good while before the meeting of our General Conference—will therefore a favorable or unfavorable outcome largely depend.

Wie es mit dem Mergerplan augenblicklich (Mitte Juni) steht.

Die meisten unsrer Distriktskonferenzen haben bis jetzt getagt und zu dem Vereinigungsplan Stellung genommen. Sie haben sich mit überraschender Einstimmigkeit für denselben ausgesprochen. Nur der Nebraska-Distrikt hat seine Zustimmung von gewissen Bedingungen abhängig gemacht. Die andern empfehlen der Generalkonferenz, nunmehr die nötigen Schritte zu einer Verwirklichung des Planes zu tun.

Die andern beiden Kirchenkörper haben es mit der Sache nicht ganz so eilig. Die „Vereinigten Brüder" auf ihrer Generalkonferenz zu Lancaster, Pa., beschlossen am 21. Mai, wie folgt: „Wir sehen in dem ‚Unionsplan' den ersten Schritt zu einer schließlichen Vereinigung der drei Kirchen, halten aber ungebührliche Hast für unangebracht und erachten es für nötig, zunächst miteinander besser bekannt zu werden. Daher ernennt die Generalkonferenz eine Kommission von zwanzig Gliedern, welche sowohl den Plan als die Arbeitsmethoden der drei Kirchen einer gründlichen Prüfung unterwerfen und der nächsten Generalkonferenz Bericht erstatten soll. Im Falle die Bischöfe und die Kommission finden sollten, daß die Kirche schon vorher zur Stellungnahme bereit ist, so soll eine außerordentliche Konferenz zur Beschlußfassung über den Plan einberufen werden" (siehe Bericht des „Evang. Herald" vom 13. Juni).

Die Generalsynode der „Reformierten Kirche," in Sitzung zu Indianapolis, Ind., faßte am 27. Mai ähnliche Beschlüsse. Sie sind denen der „Vereinigten Brüder" wesentlich angepaßt. Wie die „Vereinigten Brüder" sieht sie in dem Unionsplan den ersten Schritt zu einer schließlichen organischen Vereinigung, warnt aber auch vor ungebührlicher Eile. Sie ernennt ebenfalls ein Komitee von einundzwanzig Gliedern. Dies Komitee soll etwaigen Anregungen der gemeinsamen Kommission für engere Beziehungen Folge geben. Wenn zwei Drittel des Komitees dafür sind, so sollen solche Anträge den Klassen unterbreitet werden zur abschließenden Beschlußfassung (welche innerhalb eines Jahres stattfinden soll). Sind zwei Drittel der Klassen dafür, so soll eine spezielle Generalsynode berufen werden, zur selben Zeit und am selben Ort wie die speziellen Sitzungen der Evangelischen Synode und der Vereinigten Brüder, oder eines dieser Körperschaften, und diese soll Schritte tun zu einer gemeinsamen Organisation.

Es wird also jedenfalls noch ein Jahr oder zwei dauern, bis das Endresultat dieser Einigungsbewegung vorliegt.

The Christian World

"Otterbein a Road Builder"

By Dr. G. D. Batdorf, Dayton, Ohio

Rev. Philip William Otterbein was born in the city of Dillenburg, Germany, on the third day of June, 1726. Every voice that we hear bears its testimony to the nobility of the Otterbein family. His father was a godly and cultured minister of the Reformed Church, the rector of the Latin School of Dillenburg. He was called "the right reverend and very learned John Daniel Otterbein." In a paper written by the faculty of Herborn University, his mother is spoken of as "the right noble and very virtuous woman, Wilhelmina Henrietta Otterbein." Mr. Otterbein was graduated from the University of Herborn in 1745, and three years later finished his studies in theology. He was ordained to the holy ministry, June 13, 1749. The four years following his graduation were given successively as teacher in his alma mater and pastor of several congregations. Throughout life he read Latin as freely as his mother tongue. Many of his sermons and other manuscripts were written in that language. He also read with great ease the Greek and Hebrew and French languages, and later in life acquired much freedom in English. The marks of a superior culture and ripe scholarship were unmistable in all that he did.

In 1752 he answered the missionary call from America, and together with five other young men came with Rev. Michael Schlatter to this country, where his life and labors found their true fulfillment. They were received at New York, after a four months' voyage, by Rev. Dr. John Muhlenberg, of the Lutheran Church, who greeted them in the words of the Master: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Immediately he received and accepted a call to the First Reformed church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which appointment he served with great acceptability and success from 1752 to 1758. From 1758 to 1760 he served the church in the Tulpehocken settlement. His subsequent ministry led him to pastorates in York, Pennsylvania, and Frederick and Baltimore, Maryland. On November 17, 1813, at the ripe age of 87 years, five months, and 13 days, full of labors and crowned with honors, his spirit entered into rest.

His last words to his brethren were: "Farewell. If any inquire after me, tell him I die in the faith I have preached." For nearly six weeks after this event he lingered on the borderland. When the end came, Doctor Kurtz of the Lutheran church was at his bedside and offered the last prayer. Otterbein responded: "Amen, amen; it is finished, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Rallying once more, he said slowly and distinctly: "Jesus, Jesus, I die, but

thou livest, and soon I shall live with thee. The conflict is over and passed. I begin to feel an unspeakable fullness of love and peace divine. Lay my head upon my pillow and be still." A divine stillness reigned! For the spirit of the great Otterbein had gone!

His name and place in the church are secure. Toward the close of his life Bishop Asbury asked Bishop Otterbein a number of questions concerning his life and labors. All of these but one he answered. The last question was, "Will you give any commandments concerning your bones and the memoirs of your life?" When no reply was made, Mr. Asbury concluded, "Your children in Christ will not suffer you to die unnoticed." And thus it has been. The great Reformed Church, with its noble history, and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, do him honor. It is a profound satisfaction to record that his name of membership was never withdrawn by himself nor erased by others, from the roll of the Reformed Church. Both denominations claim him and love him. He belongs to the whole church. Imperishable garlands encircle his fair name. His enduring monument is his life lived into the church and enshrined in her heart and life forever.

Those who are familiar with the events of those memorable years recall that, as time went on, his ministry followed a constant extension and enlargement beyond the boundaries of his regular parishes. Kindred spirits of like experience and faith joined themselves with him in the perpetuation of his labors. Great religious gatherings like the historic Isaac Long barn meeting helped to crystallize and cement those fellowships and in due time gave birth to the denomination which we all love. The one hundred and fifty years in which the convictions and ideals of Otterbein have gloriously triumphed are a sufficient vindication of the belief that Providence led the way and put upon the Church which grew out of his life the stamp of a Divine credential.

Perhaps the fact most far-reaching and significant in his life was a profound and genuine and satisfying religious experience. The approach to his experience covered many years. His life was nourished and inspired at the altars of true religion in old orthodox and evangelical Germany. The atmosphere of a pious home, reenforced by piety in the nation, afforded high motives to his spiritual ideals. The writings of devout theologians were studied by him. Spiritually-minded men were his teachers. The warm stream of pietism under Spener flowed throughout Germany, and Herborn University was the center of a very vital and exalted type of religious life and experience. These varied influences like so many currents of life entered into the life-stream of young Otterbein and enriched his life.

But the crisis of it all was reached during his pastorate of the First Reformed Church in Lancaster. We have his own testimony for the authority of this assertion. Bishop Asbury asked him, "By what means were you brought to the gospel of God and our Savior?" The answer came: "By degrees was I brought to the knowledge of the truth, while I was at Lancaster." On a Sunday morning, after having

preached an earnest sermon on repentance and faith, one of his auditors, conscious of spiritual need, came to him for advice. The minister knew not what to say to this awakened sinner. His reply was, "My friend, advice is scarce with me today." He refrained from offering help to others in these deepest needs of the soul until his own soul was fully helped. He went home. A great spiritual conflict waged in the deep of his own heart. He never left his study until he was assured of his own salvation and a great joy crowned his life. The stamp of that experience became the type of religious life for which he stood ever after. Definite and sincere repentance for sin, conscious faith in Christ and the doctrine of a profound assurance, grew out of that great religious crisis in Mr. Otterbein's life. These are the cherished tenets in the faith of the denomination which he founded.

He was a wise and permanent Master-builder. With untiring faithfulness he watched over the spiritual and temporal condition of his flocks. He had a great passion for the souls of men. Like Henry Martin, he burned himself out for others, that out of his own dying life others might live. But he also realized that a successful and permanent work for the spiritual needs of men must needs rest in adequate material foundations. And so he gave himself to build these.

Otterbein was a builder of churches. He built a great life. He built other lives in the grace and strength of God. He built the Church. These are the ideals that charm and challenge the servant of the great God. Could anything be loftier in its appeal? Such work outlasts the stars! It has upon it the stamp of eternity. All that anyone has to show for his life when the curtain falls is the amount of life he lived into other lives.

Like every great leader, he walked a lonely and ofttimes rugged way. Men who help their fellows to the fair gates of light must themselves often journey alone. The penalty of heroism is its loneliness. Charles Lamb wrote to his friend Coleridge from his place in the East India House: "I am all alone here. There are plenty of other clerks in the office, but nobody cares for poetry, nobody loves music, nobody reads the New Testament. Here I can only converse with you by letter." A greater one wrote out of the heart of a lonely conflict, "I have no one like-minded." There are times among the greatest souls when faith trembles; when the very foundations seem to become sinking sand. Then the soul reaches out its hands and gropes while the feet search for solid foundations. It is then, as our own Quaker poet has put it, that "faith plants its footsteps on the seeming void and finds the rock beneath." Otterbein had an unswerving faith in the ultimate triumph of the glorious gospel which he preached. He also cherished, with increasing definiteness and certainty, a confidence in the integrity and permanence of his own work. There comes to us a beautiful tradition from his last years which gives us an insight into his discerning faith. To his associates in these labors, Christian Newcomer and Jacob Baulus, he said, "The Lord has been pleased graciously to satisfy me fully that the work will abide." He knew that the road he was building would lead at last to the gate.

—*Religious Telescope.*

The United Brethren Church

Some Observations on Its Origin and History, by Dr. A. W. Drury, *of Bonbrake Seminary*

Despite the criticisms of the denominations of Protestantism, they have made the Protestantism of today, perhaps even the critics who see so much to criticize and deplore. In our desire to change things to accord with the demands and expanding possibilities of our times, we need not lose our appreciation of the strategy, devotion, and sacrifices of the past. The proper recognition of the spirit and course of the past should make the Christian church fluid to the needs and opportunities of each new day.

The purpose of the present article is to notice the history of the United Brethren Church as it appears and appeals to the membership of the Church, rather than to give any outline or summary of mere facts. Doctor Storrs once wrote of the Roman Catholic Church, giving particular attention to the features which appealed to the affections and loyalty of the members of that church. While he was a leader and champion of Protestantism, his article, through its psychological and historical insight, gave such a view of Roman Catholicism that it was tactfully used by the Roman Catholic Church in support of its own claims. While there are members of the United Brethren Church who pity themselves because of that membership, there are many thousands of United Brethren whose devotion and loyalty to their Church are of a deep and abiding character. They may not say much of "United Brethrenism" or "our great Church," but their attachment is vital and controlling.

The United Brethren Church claims to be of providential origin. It did not originate from schism or human purpose or ambition. Burdened by the peril of the Reformation, Luther exclaimed to God: "O God! do thou help me against all the wisdom of the world! Do this; thou shouldest do this—thou alone—for this is not my work but thine." So felt the fathers of the United Brethren Church. The Church originated in a revival of religion in which Otterbein in the German Reformed Church and Boehm in the Mennonite Church were the chief promoters. It is necessary for us to keep in mind the undefined and conflicting elements that lay hidden in the seed-plot of colonial America. Here were adventurers from the Old World. Outward hardships and spiritual destitution existed everywhere. The Germans were especially destitute and without means of helping themselves. Spiritual work for Germans and by Germans long had a necessary place and assumed various forms, here and there appearing in the spirit and methods of revivals.

It might be said that the origin of the United Brethren Church should be traced back to Otterbein's spiritual experience at Lancaster, between 1752 and 1758, or to the meeting of Isaac Long's, about 1766, thus antedating the beginnings of Methodism in America under Embury in New York and Strawbridge in Maryland, by a possible period of ten years, and antedating any definite work among the Germans

by the Methodists by another period of ten years. As Otterbein represented the German Reformed Church and as some ministers of that church with a considerable lay following came early into the movement led by Otterbein, the Reformed contingent and influence were at the first specially prominent. Later the Reformed Church held its ministers and church members more fully, and the ranks of the United Brethren were recruited more largely from persons coming from the smaller German sects and from persons unattached to any existing church or society.

Among the early United Brethren preachers were Abraham Hiestand in Virginia, and Christopher Grosh in Pennsylvania, they coming from the Moravians; the Smiths in Virginia, coming from the Lutherans; a number of ministers in eastern Pennsylvania, coming from the regular Mennonites; and Abraham Troxel, in western Pennsylvania, coming from the Amish section of the Mennonites. Even the ministers raised up from the laity of the Reformed Church were about as little disposed toward churchly elements as those that came from the minor German societies or sects. Hence the delayed and prolonged effort in building up organizations, discipline, standards of ministerial preparation, and institutions of learning. Success amidst all of these difficulties was the surest evidence of the vitality of the religious movement and of providential guidance and support. Though ultimate ideals were slow in forming, the vindication of the religious movement was especially in that it brought under its influence a large section of the population of our country who, but for this movement, would have been unreached and unhelped, and the Church as it is today made impossible. It is hard to estimate how much the vigor and aggressiveness of the Church in after years was the result of the human material gathered and the hardships endured in the earlier years. The general shifting from the German to the English character between 1820 and 1840 brought special trials and losses.

While for some purposes it may be right to say that the United Brethren Church dates from the early years of Otterbein's ministry in America, it is best for most purposes to use the name "the religious movement" down to the time of the regular series of annual conferences beginning in 1800. From that time actual church character may be affirmed, though many new features and a continued development were to be reached through the years. Beginning in 1800 with a few thousand adherents, only by a stretch of language could they be called members, the Church membership has come in 1928 to be 406,678; the Sunday-school enrollment, 438,135, and the total annual expenditure, $6,789,435. In this period have been developed strong and effective Church departments—Publication, Home and Foreign Missions, Church Erection, Sunday-school, Educational, Women's Missionary, and Young People's work.

In doctrine the Church is evangelical and Arminian. In government it is composite, having in equal balance episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational elements. The Bishops are superintendents. The presbyterial elements signify that the government is representative,

ministerial elders and laymen being chosen to the General Conference by vote of the entire membership. Congregational features become more prominent as congregations become more firmly established. In spirit and effort the Church has ever taken and held a strong position for moral reform and social betterment. Because of differences that came to exist as to the reception and retention of members of secret societies there was in 1889 a withdrawal from the Church, now represented by a membership of about seventeen thousand, they still holding to a restrictive rule.

Looking across the lines to other churches, union with which is now being considered by the United Brethren Church, a few points may be noted. In the past there has been much contention between the United Brethren and the Reformed in regard to Otterbein's relationships and the earlier conditions among the Reformed and the United Brethren. A better feeling is made possible by the willingness on both sides that actual facts "shall be allowed to go to history." The British now assist the Americans in celebrating their Independence day. In 1881, when the hosts of Methodism were crowding the streets of London, astonished Anglicans were reported as saying, "How many Anglicans might our church have had if our fathers had been a little more discerning and considerate!" Such changes of feeling are made possible by allowing actual facts to go to history.

With the Evangelical Synod of North America the United Brethren Church has much in common. German stock and language and the struggle to strike root in new and strange soil in America present strong resemblances. But there are also contrasts. The early United Brethren, though they included some new arrivals from Germany, were principally native-born Pennsylvania Germans. The Church held itself too much and too long to Germans of longer residence in America and neglected, to its own hurt, to extend its efforts to the multitudes of new arrivals from Germany. Later this work was taken up in Ohio with good results.

The Evangelical Synod represents the Evangelical Church of Germany, formed in 1822-29, when the Lutheran and Reformed churches were in certain German states brought into a union, the Reformed characteristics, however, predominating. Immigrants coming at different times since the consummating of the union have joined themselves together to conserve the heritage received from the Fatherland. In some respects they would represent the earlier German stages of the United Brethren Church. Some representatives on their side have expressed the need of elements that the United Brethren Church might supply, particularly in the line of evangelism and closer connectional features. They have, however, a solidarity and a tradition of churchliness and scholarship quite their own.

Thus this sketch may close with this glance at the new proposals for the work and affiliations of the United Brethren Church.

Book Review

(When ordering books, please mention this Magazine.)
NOTE—Reviews, when not signed, are by the Editor.

Humanity and Christianity, by *Francis J. McConnell,* Bishop Methodist Episcopal Church. The MacMillan Co., New York, 1928. 153 pages.

We have heard much in these latter years of Humanism, of the tendency to make human values decisive in all our views of life. This is often done to such an extent as to exclude theological conceptions altogether. Dr. Dietrich, one of the leading divines of the Unitarian church, has recently stated his faith as Humanism pure and simple. The supernatural finds no place in it, humanity takes the place of divinity, the religious man serves his fellowmen from altruistic motives without any inspiration from a divine source. John Dewey, the philosopher, is also frankly naturalistic. We are here not to ask where we came from, to worry about divine causation. We are here to make the world better by controlling and remaking our environment. "Philosophy clings like a timid spinster to the old-fashioned problems and ideas. These old problems have lost their meaning for us. We do not solve them, we get over them. Philosophy, like everything else, must secularize itself; it must stay on the earth and earn its keep by illuminating life."

Over against this radical kind of humanism, the author seeks to show that the Christian religion while protecting and promoting human values, provides in the divine a support and an inspiration without which they could not fully be realized. It is easy for him to prove the paramount interest of the scriptures in fuller and richer human life and in the worth of the individual. The prophets of the Old Testament and Jesus in the New were not ritualists. Obedience to the will of a righteous God was the demand of the prophet, and salvation of man and his world the aim of Christ. Christ's attitude to the world was indeed one of resistance, but only to its sinful aspects. He came to establish the Kingdom of God in this world, which meant a reorganization of humanity for the purpose of its own highest good. And Christianity has followed his course. Withdrawal from the world has at times been the characteristic of a period, but even such withdrawal has often resulted in the saving of values the world would not do without (Fr. of Assisi).

The church, creeds, rituals, denominations, sacraments, have doubtless sometimes been exalted to a height where they were ends in themselves, but the underlying idea has never been entirely obscured that they were arrangements for man, instruments for the better realization of human spiritual welfare.

McConnell's contributions to the social gospel are well known. His interest in it comes out plainly in this volume. In the chapter "Society and the Higher Individualism" he punctures the usual arguments of American upholders of unlimited individualism, showing that a finer atmosphere, a better social environment would produce better individual leaders in new fields and make it easier for the submerged to attain to a truly human level of existence. In another chapter, "Jesus and the Vested Interests," the deadly hatred of the Temple authorities is pointed out as the dominant cause for Jesus' crucifixion. Rauschenbusch was one of the first to bring this into clear view and draw the lessons from it that may make the modern reformer see the seriousness of the conflict lying ahead.

Bishop McConnell's writings are always worth reading for solid thought and intelligible presentation. This book, however, is only one of his minor productions. It is not always apparent, in the process of his argumentation, why just such subjects, and not others, were chosen for discussion. Quandoque dormitat bonus Homerus, they used to say. We apply this to the author: and why shouldn't McConnel be accorded the same privilege as we accord the ancient poet?

Catholicism and the American Mind, by *Winfred Ernest Garrison.* Willett, Clark and Colby, Chicago, 1928. 267 pages, $2.50.

When Governor Alf. Smith was running for the Presidency last year, a good many of us thought it would be a calamity if he was elected. We knew he was wet (some of us did not object to that so much), that he was reared in a Tammany environment, and, above all, that he was a good Catholic. There has been disagreement as to which of these three objections did most to defeat him. The drys claim it was the fact that he, a wet man, was trying to run on a dry platform. The Catholics are just as sure that it was his religion that barred his way to the White House. The exact proportion of his handicaps may be hard to determine, but his Catholicism was without question a very essential element. Protestants know very well that a man's religious adherence should not disqualify him for any office. They were convinced, on the other hand, that Rome has always interfered in politics wherever it could; and they had the ineradicable feeling that a real Catholic is always a Catholic first, and then an American. It was foolish to think that a victory for Smith would bring the pope, or popery, to America at once; but it was not so foolish to be afraid that the hierarchy would make political capital out of the fact that there was a Catholic president in the White House.

W. E. Garrison made a searching study of the whole question and put his conclusions before the American public in this book. He has honestly tried to be fair and to divest himself of his Protestant bias to the best at his ability. He is by no means as sanguine and optimistic as the late Theodore Roosevelt, who used to say that he would be delighted to see the country elect a Catholic for president. He is more critical because better informed. Still, if he has his apprehensions he gives, in every case, good reasons for them. Al. Smith found

it easy to convince the public that his religion would in no way come into collision with his patriotic and official duties. But when you listen to the ecclesiastical authorities whom Mr. Garrison quotes profusely through his entire argument, you won't be quite so sure that the church would not exert a conscious, or unconscious, pressure.

The author goes into the subject fully equipped, by careful study, to handle it adequately. The Catholic Church claims absolute authority over its members in all matters of faith and morals, and it claims furthermore that it is her province to determine in each case what belongs to such matters. This authority she derives not from the bible only, but from the bible as preserved, interpreted and developed by the traditions of the Church. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth; its teachings were first proclaimed by the apostles. The authority and inspiration of the apostles passed over to the Church, i. e. its constituted authorities. The Church cannot change the bible, but it has the function of interpreting it and of bringing out into the light truths that may have been contained in the Word only in germinal form. The chief factor in the preservation of truth, it may therefore be said, is institutional rather than documentary; *tradition* takes *precedence* over *scripture*. Tradition is the teaching of the Church under the provision of the bishops, or, ultimately, the pope. Only so can infallible teaching be guaranteed. The necessity of preserving the "deposit of faith" calls for the Church as an authoritative source of Christian teaching. The Vatican Council of 1870 made the pope the infallible interpreter of divine truth. The pope has control of the spiritual realm, the state of the secular. It is easy for the author to show that the popes have often encroached upon matters of the state. Leo XIII calls popular government and political equality false principles. Pius IX said, it is an error to assert that the Catholic religion should not be held as the only religion of the state, to the exclusion of all others. Catholic writers and priests have tried to soften such utterances down, but their explanations are only to the effect that at the present time the Church has not the power or does not find it convenient to carry out her claims to the full; they never would dare to concede that the theories advanced by the popes were antiquated.

Areas of possible conflict would be found in the Church's position on marriage (she is against divorce); church property (she can't allow taxation of such); education (the parochial school, should be supported by state or city). According to Catholic teaching, the state should start and support schools, but the Church is to man and manage them.

Chapters on Promotion and Propaganda give interesting information on the missionary activities of the Church and on its inner organization. Others seek to show that the Catholic Church, since the condemnation and suppression of Modernism, has become more medieval than it was 30 years ago and that papal absolution is as uncompromising as it ever was.

Protestants will have to live in friendship with their Catholic fellow-citizens, but see to it that the state does not yield its prerogatives nor the Catholic Church is given preeminence over other religious bodies.

Christianity Today, by *Frederick Eiselen, Doremus A. Hayes, W. Schermerhorn, Lesley E. Fuller, Ernest E. Tittle, Erl G. Whitchurch, Harris F. Rall* (Editor). Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1928, 274 pages.

The book is dedicated to "those Christian ministers who are seeking to interpret the old message in this new day." It contains 15 lectures (originally broadcast to radio audiences) by members of the faculty of Garret Biblical Institute, a graduate school of theology affiliated with Northwestern University (Evanston, Ills.), from Grace Methodist Church (Rev. C. Copeland Smith).

The power to keep the Christian organization functioning, to "get results," is a clear conviction, a definite faith that holds to God in Christ. This has always been the Christian message and always will be. But it has to be so preached as to commend itself to the people of to-day. If all great questions are to be settled by the ideas that command the minds of men, the Christian truth must be set forth clearly, intelligibly and convincingly. What the church needs, therefore, is a *teaching ministry.* It is not dogma we need, not a creed enforced by the church as a legal authority, to which men submit whether there be inner conviction or not. We need doctrines; what the teachings of the church are on the problems of the individual and of society; what our relation to, and appreciation of, science is in this modern day; all these things, and many more, require luminous, adequate and plausible presentation. The church cannot appeal simply to authority, either its own or that of the inspired word. It must meet the world on its own ground, and by availing itself of all help science and experience can give, establish a favorable assumption for the verity of its faith. It will never aim at scientific demonstration. Religion will always move in the province of spiritual attitudes. Still, faith is no enemy to knowledge nor to progress; it puts no premium on ignorance, superstition or credulity. If it can be shown that it supplies needs which the man of to-day shares with the man of yesterday, its path will be cleared of a great many stumbling blocks.

Professor Eiselen, speaking of the Use of the Bible to-day, recommends critical bible study. Bible reading always needs the devotional spirit and prayerful meditation. It needs no less (for the preacher at least) intense application if the student is to benefit from the labors of modern scholarship. In the Old Testament we meet in the prophets men "dominated by a vital experience of God, the conviction of a divine call and a sense of responsibility for results; they were holy men who, inspired by a consciousness of personal communion with God, were not afraid to make new ventures of faith. Such must be the modern prophet-preachers who would lead their people through

the crisis of the present and the future. The principal task of these men was to preserve, develop, spiritualize, and encourage the practice of religion in all human relationships. And is not this the task of the modern preacher? It is safe to say that without the work of these ancient prophets Israel never could have become the prophetic nature which prepared the way for Him who was in a unique way the spokesman, the interpreter, the revealer of the Father, even Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master."

In "the New Testament Ideal of Christian Culture" (by D. A. Hayes) the author derives from the fact that the Spirit will guide into all truth, and from the example of Paul, the scholar, a sanction for our modern conception of what all-around Christian education should do for man. We believe that the intellect has its rights as well as the conscience and the heart; that "the diploma of a Christian college stands first of all for true and thorough and broad scholarship."

The reviewer agrees with the writer that the belittling talk, sometimes heard, of "mere culture" is irreligious. Scholarship and acquaintance with the trends of modern thought are a necessary equipment of the minister. Nevertheless, the New Testament ideal of Christian Culture is chiefly and almost solely spiritual. To Paul the wisdom of the Greeks had failed to find God, and for their art he had neither eye nor appreciation. It would have been better for the writer to have pointed this out and to have shown the historical reasons for the incompleteness of the New Testament cultural picture. In a chapter, "Faith in God," (by Professor Rall) the author speaks of the contribution of science to our conception of God. He discusses Evolution as disclosing the way God works, has worked in the past, and works now (by slow, patient, age-long processes as to man and nature). He accepts evolution. Christianity, he says, is not tied up with the letter of the bible nor with a particular formulation of doctrine.

We agree, of course, with this statement. But, in a way, we have never been able to greatly appreciate the contributions science has made to our idea of God. It is true, we know better now the world God made, its vastness, its unity under law, the wonders of the infinitesimally small. Our belief in his power, his wisdom, his omnipresence, his unchangeableness (because of the continuity of his law everywhere and always) may have been strengthened by the observation of his works. But it has not been changed. The best thing science has done in this respect seems to lie in the fact that in spite of all the denials of science we still can hold fast to God and have good reasons for it.

Another thing. If, as we agree, we need a teaching ministry today, why not say something in this book, about the other Christian teachings: about Christ's deity, about the atonement, his resurrection, about the miraculous element in the bible, in the Old and New Testaments? Granted that this is delicate ground, granted that concessions and reductions may have to be made: but why be silent about it?

Other chapters deal with Foreign Missions, with "Christianity and

the Nations," "Our Changing Morals." Dr. Tittle has a fine chapter on "the Sword and the Spirit," in which he fires a broadside against war. Replying to those who say, "in this world of ours force is the ultimate power," he says beautifully: "When Socrates drank his cup of poison, which was the ultimate power, the arms of Athens or the ideas of the sage? When St. Paul laid his head upon the block, which was the ultimate power, the legions of Caesar or the faith of the missionary? When Luther was tried for his life at Worms, which was the ultimate power, the sword of the emperor or the spirit of the monk?

The mightiest empire "this world of ours" has ever known once took a village carpenter and dragged him to a skull-shaped hill and there, amid hissings and mockings, while soldiers diced for his tunic, nailed him to a cross. But the pierced hands of that crucified carpenter have lifted empires off their hinges; they have turned the stream of history out of its channel; they still govern the ages. Today the sword of Caesar lies buried forever under centuries of accumulated débris, whereas the spirit of Jesus is more than ever alive!"

Within the limits they set to themselves, the writers have done a commendable piece of work. While they have by no means touched on all points that need a modern restatement, the matters discussed are all of timely interest and vital importance.

The Master. A Life of Jesus Christ by *Walter Russell Bowie*, Rector of Grace Church, New York City. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928, 328 pages, $2.50.

This book is another effort to interpret the meaning of the life of Jesus. "The Man of Nazareth, hated, crucified, dishonored, has outlived all the mighty things that mocked him. With strange persistence, his influence endures. The thought of him haunts the minds of men with the unsolved problem of the secret of his power. He challenges and disturbs us as others who were accounted conquerors and creators cannot do. How shall we explain this power of the man who died on Calvary? To try to answer this most fascinating question is the purpose of every book which deals with Jesus." Was the influence of Jesus super-human because he himself was super-human? This is the solution offered by Papini in his "Life of Christ," and by Chesterton in his "the Everlasting Man." To Chesterton, the life of Jesus is a visitation to this earth in person of the "mysterious maker of the world"; to Papini this same life is "an abyss of divine mystery between two divisions of human history."

The mystery that is in Jesus can never be expressed by a definition but rather by a suggestion which leads the imagination on to explore a reality rich and various. The concept e. g. of Jesus as incarnate God is an attempt to translate a spiritual intuition. Its meaning is that in Jesus there came into the realm of human experience a spiritual force of such beauty and power that the only language which those who felt it can find adequate is to call it "very God." Preachers and theologians have stressed the super-human and super-

natural too much. As a consequence, there have come out in recent years many books on the life of Jesus which discard this element almost altogether (Mary Austin, "A Small Town Man"; Barton, "The Man Nobody Knows"; Barbusse, "Jesus"; Shirley Case, "Jesus, A New Biography"). The book that according to our author comes nearer to a worthy presentation of the greatness of Jesus than any other is Middleton Murry's "Jesus, Man of Genius."

It is essentially the interpretation he attempts himself of the mystery of the person and influence of Jesus. All genius has in it the quality of poetry. The true poet is he who by some mystic gift from the Eternal sees into the heart of things; and the utmost poet is he who with unshadowed eyes sees into the heart of God. Jesus was the supreme poet because he saw with clearer vision, felt with more exquisite understanding, and could interpret with surer certainty than any other, the beauty and mystery of life and man and God. Poetry cannot be caught in the hot hands of a heavy literalism. All creeds and theologies can be valuable only as symbols, "arrows of suggestion blazing the golden path ways of their signaling into those still distances where articulation cannot go."

On this theory then the writer bases his delineation of the "portrait" of the Master the book presents. Jesus is the great spiritual poet. He is in the line of the prophets, who by virtue of their spiritual endowment had a clearer vision of the things of God than their contemporaries and proclaimed them with unshakable authority. And his is not only the unerring insight; in unbroken communion with the Eternal his life was so governed by the divine spirit that it was an adequate illustration of the character of God himself.

It is then not necessary to account for his unique personality by a miraculous conception of his birth. The infancy stories are a later stage of thought and belief. John and Paul (as well as Mark) know nothing of them. As symbols of the spiritual significance of Jesus they carry an immortal truth, but they cannot be used as materials which help us historically to understand the mind of Jesus.

With great thoroughness the environment in which Jesus grew up is described: the place, the traditions, the religious training, the leading sects, the government, the hopes and fears of the age. Then follows his baptism, his temptation, his ministry in Galilee, the "year of opposition," his arrest and trial, his death.

Concerning the resurrection the author says that "the disciples had the vital conviction that Jesus, in a new way, yet with his unmistakable spirit clothed in recognizable form, not only showed himself to them alive but also gave them the commission of that gospel of God's undefeated love for which he had dared to die." How they became sure that he was alive it is impossible to tell. "Simply the disciples knew, with that ineffable inner certainty which only the issues of life can prove, that they were in touch again with the vast soul of Jesus, dominant over death."

"The truth of the risen and living Jesus does not depend on the evidence for the reanimated body of Jesus and the empty tomb, al-

though it was in the very early Christian community that this mistake began." The truth of the resurrection of Jesus finds better vindication in the mighty change it made in the disciples and in what it has done in the history of the church through the centuries.

The reader of this book will follow the writer with interest and profit as he portrays the scenes of Christ's life with vivid colors. The main thesis of the author, however, we consider untenable. Jesus was not a religious genius only, not only the greatest poet of the spiritual life. According to his own testimony and that of his disciples, he was more. His authority was greater than that of all the prophets. A mere genius could not possibly invite all the heavy laden ones and give them rest. He could not be mentioned with the Father and the Spirit in one breath. His could not be the only name by which men are saved.

Nor could he have the position Paul and John consistently attributed to him. The author says, Jesus was not most like God because he was unlike men. Because he expressed the perfection of human possibilities—not through some miraculous difference from it —he is the incarnation of the life of God. In other words, he stresses the humanity of Christ: he was mankind's ideal. True, he was. Still, he was more; and though it is the problem of the ages, to sacrifice, or to detract from, his deity brings us no nearer the solution.

Affirmative Religion, by *Winfred Ernest Garrison.* Harper & Brothers, New York, 1928, 292 pages.

Some of us have known Mr. Garrison, the Literary Editor of the "Christian Century," for years, from his book reviews and articles that have appeared in that paper. Here in this book he gives us his general attitude on the Christian religion. He is a Liberal but not one of those whose strength lies in their negations. He detests to see discussions of what we may "still believe." According to him faith does not become increasingly difficult under modern conditions of scientific knowledge and social tensions. No, it was never so easy as now to believe the things worth believing. Of course, a religion of theological dogmatism and hierarchical or textual authoritarianism cannot meet our needs. To be successful in Christian living we must study human nature; we shall move forward by research, observation, adventure, not by the mere study of bible texts.

It is the method of science to study facts and to rely on the evidence thus found. The tendency in religion in the past has been to emphasize authority rather than evidence. Many ministers to-day have caught the scientific spirit but they are afraid to proclaim their conclusions. They echo the sentiments of their parishioners as though they were "private chaplains cooperatively sustained." Instead they should be leaders into new fields of truth to their flocks.

We do not have to apologize for our belief. Faith is a necessary element in human nature. By faith we assert the reality of certain values; faith is valuation and appreciation. It is also adventure and experimentation. By faith we accept the ideals of Jesus and go ahead

to realize them in our experience. A church is not a company of people holding the same opinion about religion; it is a group with a common loyalty and a common ideal.

It is hardly necessary for the reviewer to point out that faith in the ideals of Jesus implies only his ethical leadership. The New Testament faith in Christ is acceptance of him as Savior even while his ideals are still far from realized.

In a chapter "the Increasing Christ" the author gives his view of the position of Christ in the modern faith. Christ in the early Christian church was the apocalyptic king, the being so great that all his contemporaries seemed too puny to be considered. The creeds then made him the eternal Son, God of God, etc. In the Catholic Church he was the majestic being whose favor and succor were dispensed by means of the sacraments of the Church. Even the Reformation did not essentially change his nature as that of a great world monarch whose honor was the chief aim of man and earth and whose will ruled arbitrarily. To the modern man Jesus is rather the friend and brother. "It is the secret of his kingdom that it has no king." His kingdom is the dominance of his ideals. If Christ has decreased in terms of power and splendor, morally his path is upward. He is our participant in all the struggles of life. The future Christ will be one interested in all the realities of life rather than in the technicalities of formal religion.

The Holy Scriptures contain the accumulated spiritual and moral wisdom of the race. They are the record of the religious experience of the people who wrote them. They are not a dictation of the Holy Spirit; we have in them a mingling of divine and human elements. They are not all on the same high level. Some parts are the best religious literature in existence and some do not compare favorably with extra-biblical material produced by naturally inspired poets and thinkers.

The King James Version was at the time of its translation an unsurpassed master-piece. It is still unexcelled in beauty and splendor and is hallowed by long usage. Still, if we have modern translations now that render the bible language even in colloquial English, they do not detract from the dignity of the original. They give modern readers the same experience that the readers of the original bible had then, for the writers of the New Testament wrote in contemporary, conversational Greek.

Early Christianity was organized in the Church. Such an institution was necessary to preserve the religious experience of the first Christians and to spread it to coming generations. The institutionalism of Christianity has not been without its drawbacks and dangers.

"Institutions always develop power and pride, and encourage limited loyalties, and waste a disproportionate amount of energy on minor objectives which are incidental to their real goals. They are nearly always busy promoting themselves. They are entangled in

economic necessities and are forced to compromise with the status quo in order to keep their influence and their income."

Some of our religious conceptions need overhauling. The sense of sin e. g. is obscured in the modern world. We speak of men being the victims of circumstances, of sin being caused by heredity and environment. We are apt to take an optimistic view of people if they are "nice" and respectable. But sin is a real fact. Only we make little appeal by stressing sin in the theological sense, as a revolt against God or a breach of his commandments. Today sin is best combatted by pointing out its evil effects on human life, on the individual and society.

Salvation also needs to be cast in modern terms. Men are not interested in a *status* of salvation but in the things that make life richer. Salvation does not come by a arbitrary divine decree, by the imputing of the righteousness of another to us. It comes by the building of Christian character. "To be made God-like in character, to be made Christlike—that is justification, forgiveness, sanctification, reconciliation."

Here we must again record our disagreement. The author seems to adopt the Unitarian slogan, that salvation comes by character, not by faith. This is diametrically opposed to Paul's teaching and to that of the Reformers. Faith in Christ puts us in right relations to God. We are reconciled to him, are in a state of grace, a *status* of salvation. And in that new fellowship with God we have forgiveness of sin as well as a part in the power that makes for moral renewal. The aim of salvation is indeed to be Christ-like, but if sanctification was to be the same as salvation who could ever be sure of his salvation?

The writer deals with many more subjects: "religion and health," the "necessity of art," the "possible you," the "mystical mind." Of mysticism he says, it is not an instrument of knowledge. The mystic claims he has an immediate knowledge of God; he has only an immediate knowledge of his own experience which he interprets by reference to a supposed objective reality. But his experience heightens "his sense of joy in the ecstacy of life" and gives him a "consciousness of a protecting power which transforms situations of imminent peril into places of security and contentment."

In the chapter on "the Life Everlasting" the author finds support for his faith in the hereafter in the reasonableness of the view that the basis of reality is spiritual rather than material; in the resurrection of Jesus; and, chiefly, in the character of God and the belief that he is not so careless of human values as to create them only to destroy them just as they are beginning to understand them and appreciate and achieve a little.

Mr. Garrison takes an optimistic view of man and his future. He says: "In the ordinary life of ordinary people are the needs out of which grow not only faith in God but all that is noblest and most lovable in human life. It requires care and nurture, and the warmth of God's love and the light of his truth and the cooperation of men

of good will. It is this possibility of achieving a future vastly better than the past or the present that is the most human thing in human nature, and it is this possibility which is the ground of God's faith in man, which is even greater than man's faith in God. The "possible you" is the hope of the world."

The Supremacy of Jesus, by *Joseph Henry Crooker, D.D.* London, Philip Green. 186 pages.

The author of this volume was to us an unknown quantity. In looking over the authorities he quotes we find the names of Theod. Parker, W. Channing, James Martineau—all Unitarians—and R. W. Emerson (Transcendentalist). After that it was not hard to determine the camp in which he belongs.

The name of Jesus is to him, as to the rest of us, the name above every other. The greatness and abiding influence of Jesus is not due to his deity, his miracles, his teachings, he finds, but to his personality, which, "informed with the spirit of love, made righteousness an early habit of life" to Jesus. The modern criticism of the New Testament has compelled every honest and competent Christian to make a new valuation of the person of Jesus Christ. To refuse to take notice of this is equivalent to a deliberate attempt to shut out available light. The modern spirit, as manifested in all fields of human research, is *respect* for *facts*. The critical study of the New Testament has given us the facts about the life of the historical Christ. These facts may not agree with the traditional views about the Lord, but would any investigator be justified in rejecting new facts just because they were contrary to heretofore held opinions? The story of Jesus should not be read to prove the reality of his miracles, or as a report of a "mystical transaction to settle with a Shylock in the skies", but rather to increase the strength and purity of our inner life.

The synoptic gospels give us a truer conception of the life of the Lord than the fourth gospel. However, even they contain much of legendary embellishment. The oral tradition preceding the gospels necessarily underwent many changes in course of time. The purpose was not only to tell what had happened but to win converts. So the tendency to meet the expectations of Jew and Gentile led to an idealizing of the life of the Christians' hero. His works as well as his teachings were affected by this process. In the fourth gospel it has reached its culmination. This gospel may have been written in part by the apostle, but it received its final form at the hands of a man writing in the early second century. Jesus is the incarnation of the logos, the intermediate principle between God and nature, the creative agent of the universe. While the Synoptics sought to show Jesus as the fulfiller of the Messianic hope of Israel, the philosophical writer of our 4th gospel, adding to John, composed a speculative treatise about Jesus.

What we have now in the 4th gospel is "history transmuted into dogma" (Reuss), it is "far more like the drama of a poet than the

work of an historian" (Schuerer). It is the dramatization of a philosophy of redemption.

Gospel criticism helps us to a clearer historical appreciation of Jesus. It would be disloyalty to truth and a resort to duplicity, to know these facts and not to preach or teach them in church and Sunday school.

It is a mistake to think that acceptance of the modern view of the New Testament and of the life of Jesus would deprive the gospel of its power. On the contrary, our gains would be greater than our losses. For instance, the birth stories when given up as literal facts, still testify to the greatness of the disciples' faith. They were so greatly helped by him that they were sure he had a divine origin, and so they freely created incidents to describe what they felt must have been the origin of this extraordinary man. These stories are not records of his childhood, but products of his life; not the history of his birth, but symbols of the quality of his ministry. The same applies to to the resurrection stories. So are also the speculative additions in John the highest tribute to his character.

A more rational attitude towards the miraculous features of gospel history will bring a rebirth of Christianity, so predicts the author. Take the cures of Jesus. They are an essential part of his ministry. There may have been healings of some sort. We don't know what happened in detail, but the stories certainly "demonstrate the impression of the magnitude of his manhood."

When you consider that Jesus came to establish an eternal Kingdom of love, when you reflect in his amazing intellectual greatness and on the tidal wave of personal influence that went out from him, you don't wonder that his disciples deified him. You won't follow them in this mistake—for to say he was divine, he was God explains nothing—but you will be ready to bow to him as to the greatest moral authority that was ever known to man, as to a religious genius that has no equal.

Where did Jesus get this insight, this spirit, this power? He got it from immediate communion with the father. And these his inner resources are open to us, we get them in the same way, following the inspiring example and the lofty teachings of the Master.

Immediate communion, the writer insists. The doctrine of the cross as the way to open communion with the father to sinful man, is a theological invention of a later stage. It is not necessary to take this false doctrine out of the teaching of Jesus. It is only necessary to *keep* it out, for it was *never in it.*

Jesus is supreme as the teacher of the inner life, as the one who placed love on the throne of the heart, in such a way that his own example became contagious. And as he is the unsurpassed moral teacher, so he can also be trusted and accepted as an authority in his religious teaching: that God is our father and that immortality is waiting for us. "To get the best out of the ethics of Jesus, we must also go with him in his spiritual convictions.